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CANADA

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PULPIT.

FIRST SERIES.

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PREFACE.

THE publication of the *Canada Presbyterian Church Pulpit*, has been undertaken to supply a want which has for some time been felt to exist, and which every year renders more apparent, namely, a means for estimating the pulpit power of an influential and growing Church. It is hoped that other still more important purposes may be served by this and the succeeding volumes of the series; that they may quicken religious thought, be helpful to personal piety and family devotion, and, in remote parts of the country, destitute of the stated ministry of the Word, furnish pulpit readers with sermons of unquestioned merit.

The arrangement of the discourses in this volume is that of the Scripture order of their themes.

So favourable have been the opinions expressed by many ministers and others as to the desirability of the series that no hesitation is felt in laying this first volume before the Church.

TORONTO, May 1st, 1871.

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CANADA

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BY REV. WM. McLAREN,

KNOX CHURCH, OTTAWA.

"*And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.*" Gen. vii, 1.

"*And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*" Acts xvi, 31.

WE have conjoined these texts from the Old and New Testaments, as illustrating, each on its own plane, substantially the same principles. "By faith, Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen of yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. xi, 7. By faith also was the jailor at Philippi saved. But the faith of Noah is presented as moving on a lower and more earthly plane. It had to do with physical danger and an earthly deliverance, while that of the jailor was exercised in reference to the ruin and salvation of the

soul. Both, however, rested on the unerring Word of God. It was the same confidence in the testimony of God which caused Noah to enter the ark, which led the jailor to embrace Christ. And it should not be forgotten that the lower exercise of faith, seen in Noah, is inseparable from the higher manifestation of the principle displayed by the jailor. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much"; and, by parity of reasoning, we may affirm, that he, who trusts God with filial confidence for deliverance from external danger, trusts Him also, as He is revealed in Christ Jesus, for the salvation of the soul. Noah and his family were saved from the Deluge, because that patriarch had already betaken himself, by a living faith, to the spiritual ark, had obtained an interest in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and was "an heir of the righteousness which is by faith." The benefits which, in our text, he is invited to share, are blessings which accompany salvation. It is, therefore, the same faith which reveals its power in Noah and in the jailor. The peculiarity which demands special notice in both these cases, is the manner in which the salvation of the children is represented as linked with the faith and obedience of the parents. The promise to the jailor is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house*." And when Noah, as an heir of the righteousness of faith, is invited to enter the ark, *all his house* enter with him. It certainly cannot be imagined that it was the faith or moral worth of Noah's family which secured them a place in the ark. This is sufficiently evident from the last clause of the verse, where the righteousness of Noah alone is mentioned as the reason why he and his family are called to enter the ark. And the shameful conduct of one of them, on a subsequent occasion, throws painful light on his character.

The connexion recognized in these texts, between the faith of the parent and the salvation of the children, is not found in these alone. It pervades both the Old and the

New Testaments, and is stamped on the arrangements of the visible church in all ages. It cannot be unimportant for us to obtain distinct and Scriptural views of *the nature and extent* of this connexion, and to ascertain, so far as we have data, the *ground* on which it rests. It is to this inquiry we now invite your attention.

I. What is the connection revealed in the Scriptures between the faith of the parent and the salvation of the child?

1. We answer,—That it is not that all the children of believing parents are already in a saved state.

This is, for all practical purposes, the position of those who maintain the dogma of baptismal regeneration. Indeed, they go farther. For, if all who are baptized are, in the very act, necessarily regenerated, not only are all the children of believers who have submitted to baptism already in a saved state, but multitudes, whose parents show too plainly that they are, and ever have been, strangers to that faith which works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. And the connection, certainly, is not as some have strangely imagined, that the children of believers do not need regeneration, inasmuch as they are already, by their pious parentage, freed from the taint of original sin, and restored to the favour of God. Facts prove that the children of believing parents, as well as others, begin to exist out of the favour of God, and under original sin. The bias which, so soon as they can distinguish right from wrong, they invariably display to run into sin, proves this sufficiently to all who are capable of reflecting on what is involved in the fact. And it should be noted that Paul addresses Ephesian Christians, many of whom, at the time he wrote, were the children of believing parents, as "by nature the children of wrath, even as others." David, though born within the pale of the visible church, confesses that he was "conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity." The Scriptural account of the origin of the character of all the ungodly, whatever

the nature of their parentage, is that "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Psalms lviii, 3.

Regeneration is not a change with which heathens and utterly godless persons alone have to do. Nicodemus was no heathen. He had been circumcised, like other Jews, in his infancy, and had afterwards lived as a highly respected member of the visible church, of which he was an honored ruler; yet it was to him that our Lord, with such solemn emphasis, said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It may, however, be said, that although the children of Christian parents do need regeneration, and are not all made partakers thereof in baptism, sooner or later they are all regenerated and saved.

2. We remark,—That the connection is not *invariable* and *absolute*. The promise, "Thou shalt be saved, and thy house," does not imply that all the children of believing parents are absolutely assured of eternal life. Were this the force of such promises, salvation must needs descend from sire to son to the end of time; and every Jew, as a descendant of believing Abraham, must needs be reckoned an heir of glory. Our Lord, however, does not hesitate to speak of one who could address Abraham as father, as lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torment. while to Sodom and Gomorrah he assigns a lot more tolerable, in the day of judgment, than awaits others of that favoured race. And, as Noah was a believer, and perfect in his generation—were the connection absolute and invariable between the faith of the parent and the salvation of the child—it is easy to see that the entire human race must now be ranked among the saved. But it is quite unnecessary to prove to any one who reads the Scriptures with an honest desire to know what they teach, that they never design to assert that the faith of the parent insures the salvation of the child. When God says, "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he

will not depart from it," or "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," he does not mean to divest himself of that absolute sovereignty, which the Scriptures represent him as exercising, in dispensing salvation. It still remains true, that "as many as are ordained to eternal life believe." There is no such invariable connection between parental faith and filial piety as, in any way, makes void the Bible declarations, "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. viii, 30. "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." John vi, 44. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." John vi, 37.

Let none presume that pious parentage will save them. It is still true, that, "He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy." "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Matt. xi, 27. What, then, is the nature of this connection, and what is the force of such promises? Are they without meaning?

3. We remark,—That the connection is of the nature of a *general law* or *rule*, according to which God is wont to dispense salvation. It is not an invariable or absolute connection which obtains between parental faith and filial piety, but it is so general that we may rationally take it for granted, and act upon it. It is such a general rule, or law, as that in nature which, when we sow our seed and till our soil, leads us to expect the harvest. This law is general,—not invariable. God may withhold the early and the latter rain. He may send blasting and mildew, or untimely frosts. The labour of the olive may fail, and fields yield no meat. But, while such irregularities occur, they serve only to stimulate our industry, and lead us to feel our dependence on the Most High. No one imagines that the promise of seed time and harvest, while the world stands, is an empty form. When we read in the Scrip-

tures, "Seest thou a man diligent in business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men," or, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," we perceive, at once, that this is true, as a general law, or rule, but not as the invariable experience of individuals. There may be men diligent in business who neither grow wealthy, nor stand before kings, yet the whole history of mankind vindicates the general rule that "the hand of the diligent maketh rich." In like manner, though pious parents may have ungodly children, we are persuaded that the entire history of the church shows that the majority of the children of believers do ultimately follow the footsteps of their parents. Being trained in the way they should go, when they are old they do not depart from it. They may, for a season, wander into forbidden paths, but sooner or later they return to God, and parental love sees its desire.

It is such a rule as seems most fitted to secure the end in view. It is a rule which encourages parents to labor for the salvation of their children, with as much certainty of success as inspires the husbandman, when he sows his seed or tills his soil. It is a rule which encourages the children of believers to seek salvation for themselves. To them we would say, you have special assurances of success in seeking the Lord. You are invited to seek a covenant-keeping God, whose mercy is from generation to generation of them that fear Him. From the very relation in which you stand to your believing parents, the blessing is brought very near you.—"Salvation is come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." Despise not your privileges and your opportunities; for, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenants which God made with your fathers." It is only a *general* rule, that none may presume that their carnal connection with the good will save them. "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." "Ye must be born

again." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." You have to deal with a God who is absolutely sovereign in dispensing salvation. He may not be trifled with, even by the children of believers. He is not mere passive goodness, even to you. You must comply with His terms. You must accept salvation, as His free gift, through Jesus Christ. You must come to Christ, and repose upon Him, as your redeemer and as your teacher; for "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

II. The ground of the connection between the faith of the parent and the salvation of the child.

We are far from supposing that, in order to our resting and acting upon these promises, it is necessary for us to show how it is that the faith of the parent is linked with the salvation of the child. It is enough for us to know that the Word of God has revealed such a connection. But as God usually works by means, it is certainly important that those who are to be workers together with Him, should know, as far as possible, the manner in which parental faith may influence the destiny of the child. We might, at the outset, advert to the fact that the children of Christians are saved from many *constitutional* tendencies to which the children, at least of the vicious, are exposed. The child of the drunkard has a hereditary tendency to drunkenness, which makes it much more difficult for him than for others to resist the temptations wherewith he is assailed. The child of the licentious man has a constitutional predisposition to vice, which renders him more liable than others to fall. In this way, the iniquities of the fathers are constantly visited on the children. In so far, then, as true religion has saved the parents from vice, it frees the children from this hereditary predisposition, and places them in a position more favorable for entering on the Christian life, and renders temptations less formidable to them.

We may also note that all the influences for good which parents bring to bear upon their children are rendered more potent by the *plastic power of love.* Love melts the heart, and fits it to receive deep and abiding impressions. Other things being equal, we will influence most powerfully those whom we love most cordially. And in proportion as grace purifies the hearts of parents, and enables them to love their children better, does it prepare the fallow-ground of their minds to receive the seed sown by the parental hand. But what are some of the modes in which a parent may influence his child for good? He may do so—

1. By the *force of examples.* We need not expatiate on the potency of example. Its influence, whether for good or for evil, in moulding the character, is recognized by all. Example, that it may exert its highest influence upon us, seems to demand three conditions. It must be the example of one we *love and respect.* It must be brought to bear upon us *steadily for a lengthened period.* It must come into play, *at a time when our minds are easily impressed.* All these conditions meet in the case of a Christian parent and child, as they meet no where else. The love and respect of the child for his parent opens his heart to all the influences of parental example; and before the infant has learned to lisp his father's or his mother's name, parental example begins to exert its mysterious power. And, as years roll on, and filial love and reverence increase, this influence continues to distil silently, like the dew of Heaven, upon our children. Our words, our looks, our tones, our gestures, and our actions, all leave their impress on the plastic and loving hearts of our children. And when the example is that of the consistent and loving Christian, who can estimate its power for good? Some parents are very anxious to *appear* as Christians to their children. Seek rather to make sure that you lead the Christian life; appearances will take care of themselves. Be Christians; your children will

find it out. They have sharp eyes, keen perceptions and sound judgments, and they will, in the end, take you to be exactly what you are.

2. Parents may influence their children by the truth which they teach them. The truth is God's instrumentality for the regeneration and sanctification of the soul. "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth." "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is Truth." We cannot but teach those whom we are constantly meeting, in the unreserved intercourse of private life. We impart our views when we have no thought of giving instruction. The familiar conversation of the domestic circle is one of the most powerful means of educating children into the views of their parents; and the teaching is all the more perfect that it is often quite unintentional. The truth which is thus instilled in early years, makes a deep impression on the character for life. There are some parents who profess to leave their children, until they come to years of discretion, to choose for themselves what they shall believe. They will not bias their minds to one side or the other. The idea is both cruel and absurd. As reasonably might a man refuse to teach his child the difference between wholesome food and deadly poison, until he could discover it for himself. It is, moreover, certain that concealment is impossible. Children will discover the views of their parents, and will be influenced thereby. And, indeed, there can be no more fatal discipline in error, than that professed indifference, which makes a parent refuse to distinguish between truth and falsehood in the instruction of his children.

3. Parents may influence their children by *training* them in the way they should go. We distinguish between *training* and *teaching*. There may be much teaching where there is little training. By teaching, knowledge is communicated; by training, the character is moulded and the will controlled. Training implies such a steady and kindly exercise of authority as will guide the child in the

right way. Eli taught his sons, but he did not train them. But of Abraham, God said, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." This training may commence when the infant is in its mother's arms. The very handling of it may be of that kindly yet firm sort, which, at once, soothes the feelings and commands submission; or, it may be of that impatient and irritable kind which rouses fretful and rebellious feelings in the bosom of the child. Wherever home training has secured a cordial and loving submission to parental authority, it has gone far to prepare the heart of the child for a loyal obedience to the will of God. For experience shows that obedience to parents is often the earthly gate through which we pass into the heavenly temple, to give to God the homage of our hearts.

4. Parental faith may influence the destiny of the children, by *prayer* for them. The prayer of faith availeth much. The blessing from on high must descend, otherwise example, teaching and training will all prove in vain. This blessing prayer secures; and the love which parents have for their children causes *nature* to aid *grace*, and leads them with holy urgency to prove the efficacy of believing prayer. And when parental faith, in felt weakness, takes hold in prayer of the great power of God, all things are possible to it. The blessing sought shall not be sought in vain. For the readiness with which parents, who are evil, give good gifts to their children who ask them, is the symbol which God employs to illustrate a spontaneousness much more free on his part, to give all good things to them who ask Him. And when Jesus designed to encourage united prayer, by the assurance of special power and efficacy, he so framed the promise that wherever a believing husband and wife unite in pleading for their children, they come within its range. They have always the *two* or *three*, met in the name of Christ, to whom the presence and blessing of our Redeemer is assured.

And He, who heard the Syrophœnician woman for her daughter, will not deny them, when both nature and grace make them plead for their children.

We have thus called your attention to the nature and extent of the connection between the faith of the parent and the salvation of the child, and we have endeavoured, so far as we have data, to indicate the ground on which it rests. In closing these remarks, we may learn,

1. The *reasonableness* of infant baptism. The *authority* of infant baptism must be established by appropriate Scriptural evidence. Its authority rests largely on the facts that God, under the old dispensation, constituted children members of the visible church, of which baptism is now the initiatory ordinance, and that he has never *excommunicated* them from His Church. On the contrary, He has given, in the New Testament, very distinct intimations of an opposite character. But there are those who, while conceding the authority of infant baptism, are perplexed with the thought that it seems an unmeaning or unreasonable ceremony. That children, under the old economy, were admitted to circumcision, which had substantially the same spiritual import as baptism, and was "a seal of the righteousness of faith," does not remove, but rather extend, the area of their perplexity. We believe that a small measure of attention to the revealed connection between the faith of the parent and the salvation of the child, will show that the baptism of the children of believers is a *reasonable* service. Why are adults admitted to baptism on a suitable profession of faith in Christ? It is because they are regarded as true members of the real church. But what is the Church? In the strict sense of the term, the true Church is the body of Christ. It consists of the whole number of God's elect. It is made up of all who have been, of all who are, and of all who shall be gathered into one, in Christ Jesus. These constitute "the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in Heaven." It consists of the

members of Christ's mystical body, and of these alone. It differs in this respect from the visible church :—The visible church consists of those whom we have reason, in the judgment of charity, to regard and treat as members of the church invisible. But the purest church on earth can have no absolute certainty that this judgment is correct. "Man judgeth according to outward appearance ;" only "the Lord knoweth them that are His." We can only judge and act upon a *probability*. A man makes an intelligent profession of saving faith in Jesus Christ. He declares that he has had experience of that wherein vital religion essentially consists. His life, so far as known, is in harmony with his profession. We receive him readily and properly as a member of the visible church ; because, in the exercise of charity, we regard him as a member of the church invisible. But we may be mistaken. He may be self-deceived, or a hypocrite. He may be a Judas among the disciples of Christ. We receive him on the probability that he is what he professes to be. And the many sad cases of apostasy which occur in all churches show that it is only a probability. But *profession* is not the only known ground of probability, which warrants us in regarding a person as, in the judgment of charity, a member of the Church of the first born which are written in Heaven. The *revealed connection* between the faith of the parent and the salvation of the child, supplies another. It is the ground of a *similar probability* that all the children of believing parents belong to the sacramental host of God's elect, and will be found, on the great day, upon the right hand of the Judge. The connection is not invariable and absolute, but it is so regular that we may reasonably take it for granted, and guide our expectations by it. Neither is the connection between a profession made by adults and a Christian life, invariable and absolute. Painful facts compel us to see that we have only a *probability* that the connection will be found real. And if it is reasonable that, on the ground of this probability,

those who make a profession should be regarded and treated as members of the true church, why should it be deemed unreasonable that we should regard and treat the children of believers as members of Christ's mystical body? when God has said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house*." And, if parents may reasonably take this connection for granted, may encourage themselves in duty by the statement of it, and may plead it before God in prayer, surely it cannot be unreasonable for the Church to take it for granted also, and to recognize it in the administration of her ordinances. And, if it is the established rule of the divine procedure, that the faith of the parent is linked with the salvation of the child, it need cause no perplexity, when it is found, that God has made the arrangements of the visible church harmonize with the *rule*, rather than with the *exception*." It is not a little striking, that the same chapter which contains the promise, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," gives the practical recognition, by an inspired apostle, of the principle involved, in the record it has left us of the fact, that when the jailor believed, "he was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

2. We may learn the *responsibility* of parents. Upon you very largely depends the eternal well-being or woe of your children. If you are faithful to the trust committed you, you may expect to see your children walking in the footsteps of your faith and piety; and you may hope that the family circle, broken here by death, will be re-formed in the holier and more enduring fellowship of Heaven. It is true, that all are more or less unfaithful to their high trust; but this does not make void the promise—God blesses *habitual*, though imperfect, fidelity.

We fear that false ideas of personal religion keep many of you from seeing the desire of your hearts, in the conversion of your children. You measure the religion of children by the standard of adults, and you cannot recognize,

in the simple trust in God and love to Christ, exhibited by many a little child, the very elements which, matured and developed, constitute the experienced Christian. The result is, that you come practically to regard personal religion as possible only, when somewhat mature years have been reached. But, be assured, no view of religion can be true, which does not suffer little children to come unto Christ. Try to divest yourself of such unscriptural notions. Look for and cherish the budding of early piety, and you will see more of it.

Those parents who are not leading a Christian life should reflect on the probable consequences of their conduct on their children. Your unbelief and carelessness affect them. Of Achan it is written, "And that man perished not alone in his iniquity." He involved others in his doom. It is the same now. Careless and ungodly parents generally make careless and ungodly children. Your whole life is made a curse to those dearest to you. Is it not enough that you walk yourself on the broad road? must you needs draw your children down after you? Must you make the very love they bear to you, and which you bear to them, the chains by which they are bound and drawn after you in your downward course of unbelief and impenitence? As you value their welfare and your own, turn, we entreat you, without delay, to Christ. Accept him now as your offered Saviour.—"Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark."

We fear that careless husbands, who have pious wives, sometimes seek to free themselves from the thought of their responsibility by the notion that a wife's earnestness and piety will prove in the domestic circle a sufficient counterpoise to a husband's indifference. And it is quite possible that many of the popular eulogies on the influence of pious mothers rather tend to confirm them in the idea that a wife's piety may be quite sufficient for a whole family. We do not wish to undervalue the influence of godly mothers. Multitudes will bless God through eter-

nity for believing mothers. But one cannot do the work of two; and, we doubt not, that multitudes also will, one day, bitterly mourn because, the holy influences of a mother were counterworked and nullified by the example of a careless father. The father is the *natural head* of the house, and on *him* God lays *primarily* the responsibility of the religious training of the family. It was to Noah, and not his wife, that God said, "Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark." It was to a father, that Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." It is fathers whom God commands to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." You may not roll the work on any other. You may gladly accept the aid of an helpmeet, but God holds you responsible for it. And, however potent may be the influence of a mother, there usually comes a time in the history of sons, when a sturdier guide is required, and when a mother's example and counsels must be confirmed by a father's authority, example, and knowledge of the world. Let fathers and mothers, then, be workers together with God, in leading their children in the way of life. Then may we expect the full measure of the promised blessing, and may hope that the deep yearnings of nature, in the parental heart, will be met by an eternal union with their children. The ties of nature will, in some sense, be made abiding. As by chemistry there is produced from the clay a metal most tenacious and strong, so parental love, transformed and purified by the grace of God, shall become the bond of a union between parents and children which the grave cannot destroy.

"Oh, union, purest, most sublime,—
The grave itself, but for a time,
The holy bond shall sever.
His hand, who rent, shall bind again,
With firmer links, the broken chain,
To be complete for ever!"

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

OUTLINES OF FOUR DISCOURSES BY THE REV. JOHN BAYNE, D.D., LATE MINISTER OF KNOX CHURCH, GALT.

[*Contributed by Mr. James Brown, Elder.*]

I.

"*Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.*" Psalm xxxix. 4.

LET us consider:

1st. The solemn realities in the condition of every man upon the earth.

Of these realities there are three that principally claim our attention.

1. The shortness and uncertainty of life.

How true the language of the Psalmist: "Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth." Our age, even at the longest, is as nothing before God. The man of fourscore, in our estimation, is old; but what is his age to

the years of the eternal God, who is from everlasting to everlasting? Where shall we find figures to represent the insignificance of man's age when compared with eternity? Health, strength, youth may be yours, filling the soul with hope and bright promise; yet you cannot glance at your own experience without finding there melancholy proofs of life's uncertainty. Many have been cut down in the midst of health and strength. Perhaps even now the great Disposer of events is writing down of some of you, "This year—nay, it may be, this very day—thou shalt die." Where are the many friends that commenced life with you? Is not every year, as the woodman's axe that strikes down the thick trees of the forest, leaving you more and more alone? The time approaches when you, too, must be laid low. Ponder, I beseech you, the shortness of time, its rapid flight, its dread uncertainty.

2. The impossibility of our finding an abiding and satisfying portion in the things of time.

No truth would be more obvious to man than this, were it not for sin. We judge it to be a great reality on three accounts: First, because of the unsubstantial and unsatisfying nature of the things of this life. Take rank, or worldly riches, or applause; have they any real substance in them? Is there anything in them to fill the immortal soul? Conscience forbids to say that such is the case. Second, because even in the present life they are liable at any moment to be taken from us, or we from them. Riches take to themselves wings. The dearest objects of your affection are your children; you cannot count upon their continuing with you—or even, if they continue in life, upon their remaining a source of comfort to parents that have made them idols. How often sickness spoils a man's enjoyment of the things of this world! Many are palsied in body and mind, and thus dead to all the pleasures that flow through these channels. While the things of earth are liable at any moment to be swept

away, how miserable must that man be who has no other portion. Third, because they must, no matter how long enjoyed, be at last left behind. Death separates men from all they held dear upon earth. The moment death has set his seal upon the mortal clay, man is sent, a naked, disembodied spirit, into the eternal world.

3. Man's nearness to eternity, and his need of a sure and immediate provision for that life which he is to spend in an endless state.

Death is not the end of a man; if it were, this world would be a riddle and man the greatest riddle in it. The world without and the world within him would be a perpetual mockery, ever raising hopes to dash them to earth again. Reason, that good servant of God, will not suffer man to believe that death is the end of him. How this displays itself in the breast of the infidel when death stares him in the face! We are here in training for a world to come. Let a man's conscience be awakened, and he will tremble not only at death, but at what lies beyond it. If there be a life eternal—a life beyond this, how necessary that we have a provision made for that life. The provision must be made in this life—in a word, must be made now. We are told in God's word that "in the place where the tree falleth there it shall lie." If we gain not the portion here, we cannot enjoy it hereafter. If that portion be not ours, we go to beggary, to destitution, to wrath. We need a provision of the right kind. Some things a man may carry into heaven, and others he cannot, for they are torn from his grasp. We can carry Christ with us, the love of God and the graces of the Spirit; but we cannot carry into heaven a mere form of godliness. We need a provision that will abide with us through eternity, and such we find only in Christ. Since we cannot count on a day, how much need of making an immediate provision! What folly to delay when this short, uncertain life is all that is given in which to prepare for such a future!

2nd. The universal tendency in men to shut their eyes to these realities.

Does not the uncertainity of life make you rush more eagerly into the business of life? Do you ever ask yourselves the question: "Am I ready for all that is to follow death?" If we were to ask you to spend an hour thinking on death—a most reasonable request—would you do it? Are you dealing with this simple reality as you ought? Dying men, you yet persist as if you were going to live always.

Let me appeal to your consciences. Are you realizing that you have no abiding portion here? What is that you love most, of which you think most frequently? What calls forth your utmost exertions? Is it the world and the things of the world? You know it is. You could not think more of the world if it was to be your portion throughout eternity. The world is so completely your idol that there is no room for Christ. Let me appeal to your consciences. Are you acting in harmony with the conviction you have of your nearness to eternity? Were you to die now, you know that you would go into an undone eternity. You are never sick, but this frightful vision stares you in the face, yet you make no provision for it. If a voice from heaven were to call you by name, to be carried home each one a corpse, to how many would that voice be a sentence of condemnation? How much of the past year have you spent in preparation for eternity? Ah, how little! I fear that many are ready to continue in such a state—anxious to get into the world as soon as I have said Amen.

3rd. The need we have of divine teaching to enable us to deal with these solemn realities. A man's eyes must be opened before he can rightly deal with them. This requires divine teaching. The kind of divine teaching that is needed is not every kind of impression or conviction. Every thinking man has an intellectual conviction. There are few who have not had some conviction of the

emptiness of a portion in this world. Many think because they have such occasional impressions that they are in a right state. Another kind of work must take place before they can be enabled to deal with eternal realities. What kind of teaching will enable a man thus to act? First, the only teaching is that which brings man to see that he has a lost soul to be saved; that convinces him thoroughly of sin, of judgment, of eternity, of hell; for men by nature do not feel that their souls are lost, that they are hurrying on to damnation. Second, the only teaching that will enable a man to lay up a portion for eternity is that which brings him to see in Christ the way of salvation, and to seek after the Saviour. Thus will he return from the worship of the creature, rather than of the Creator, into which he fell when he lost the capacity to seek God as his portion. Third, the only teaching is that which enables him to say of Christ—He is mine; of heaven—it is mine; in a word, that brings him to the full assurance of hope. Soon as the believer knows that he has a home in heaven, he looks upon this life as a vapour.

The invariable effect of such divine teaching is to cause the disciple to exclaim—"Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Having counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, he is constrained to say: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Delight in God as a present portion, and hope towards him as a portion forever, are good tests by which you may know whether you have ever received divine teaching.

What is your portion here? What in eternity? Can you honestly say it is God and not the world. Where do you find your chief happiness? What stimulates your efforts, fills your thoughts, draws forth your desires—God

or the world? Be not deceived. If you be still seeking your portion in this life you have not risen to the simple apprehension of the realities of your state. Men act as if the only portion they expect in another world were such as they enjoy here and now. Ah, will that really be a portion for eternity? Thoughts of that portion, desires after it, may go with you into eternity; but how will such thoughts and emotions affect you then? Will they not be one of the everlasting torments of hell?

II.

"*When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*" ISAIAH XXVI. 9.

The judgments of God are fitted to teach the world righteousness. The lesson learned from any event depends greatly upon the aspect in which it is viewed. Consider, therefore:

1st. The aspect in which God's judgments—peculiar calamities such as pestilence and war—are to be viewed.

What I desire to impress upon you is that all the calamities and evils which afflict the world are God's judgments inflicted on account of sin. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Ignorant men jump to the conclusion that calamities are a mere consequence of breaking natural laws, and fail to perceive the divine finger of judgment for sin. The Scriptures clearly teach us to trace every calamitous event to sin as its cause. They teach how such evils appeared in the world historically. We find in paradise no desolating judgments, no devastating storms, no bloody wars. All was kept in peace and happiness by the shield of the Almighty. But soon as fallen man leaves the blessed abode of innocence, judgments begin to appear. Murders, wars, plagues and all other evils pursue the sinner. In all the story of the Fall we see this lesson. We read in

Scripture of a flood sweeping away the world of the ungodly, of the confounding of tongues among the impious builders of Babel, of fire from heaven consuming the cities of the plain, of the desolations brought upon the world by the monarchs of the earth, of the destruction of Jerusalem. All these we must trace to sin, to the wrath of God against sin. They were emphatically judgments following guilt. No doubt the men of the world in these times would trace their calamities to natural causes. He who rules in the armies of heaven makes plainly known what was the one true cause. The same truth meets us in the prophecies which have been already fulfilled, and which are now being fulfilled before our eyes. God foretold the rejection of his ancient people. They are bearing now the very judgments with which they were threatened, and which they specially brought upon themselves when they said—"His blood be on us, and on our children." He has foretold in his Word the destruction of the Babylon that has been the destroyer of his New Testament church. We see the elements of that destruction now in progress, and know that they are working evil to her, because of her sin, her perversion of the truths of the Bible, her apostacy from righteousness. Not only from Scripture but from experience we learn that many of the calamitous events which afflict the world are the product of sin. True, this is not the case with all of them. We cannot say that the storm is the immediate product of a sinful act, or the earthquake the fruit of man's evil thoughts. Our Lord's commentary on the disaster which happened to the men of Siloam teaches us that we are not to look on every calamity as a special judgment for special sins. Yet while this is true of some temporal evils, there are others which can be shown to be the inevitable product of sin indulged. Of many sins we can say that they entail punishment as surely as the breaking of natural laws. A departure from honesty leads to robbery and murder, and their appropriate punishments. As

men sow they reap. Intemperance, wars and fightings, slavery, all show in their history that sin and judgment go hand in hand. Calamities, moreover, are, as Scripture teaches us, fearfully aggravated by the sins of those on whom they fall. The real sting of any judgment is not the actual pain suffered. It is sin, the consciousness of sin in them that suffer which makes howling and crying and praying, where prayer was never heard before. They fear to meet with God, who thus comes beforehand to judgment with them. Take away this, and half the pain is removed. We do not see the end of judgment in this life. Here we are in a world on its trial, in a state of probation, and the innocent suffer with the guilty. This is done in wisdom to serve a just and holy end, and all that is wanting will be rectified hereafter. Yet innocent or guilty it is still sin that suffers, and that brings the suffering.

2nd. How these judgments illustrate and display to the world God's justice.

It is plain that these calamitous events are God's judgments. God, the holy God, hates sin. Viewed as judgments, they are seen burning unquenchably in the bosom of the Almighty. Since man fell and sin entered the world, it has been desolated by judgments unknown before. Experience witnesses that God cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence. The whole history of the world is but a commentary upon the statement. These calamitous events all allow that God is the avenger of sin. We have hells on earth. Go to the home of the drunkard and see him surrounded with misery, raging with hellish passion. What but a hell there! Go to the city of the plague; gaze on the sufferers whom a deadly disease racks with perpetual pain. Another hell is there. Go to the battle-field, with its bleeding and blaspheming victims. Another hell, a forerunner of the hell that is to come! Who warrants you in saying that because God is a God of love, he will not send soul and body to hell?

Has he not said in his word "the worm dieth not"? The Almighty could have prevented war that sacrifices its millions, but he did not. If in this temporal state he permits such judgments, what will he not do in the state that is eternal! By these earthly judgments he plainly intimates that, in hell, justice will have its full course. We have seen that God is the avenger of sin, even now. We often see the wicked prospering in his way, the innocent suffering with the guilty, the less guilty suffering with the more guilty, God's own people suffering. If God's work were to end here, it would be impossible to vindicate his perfect righteousness. But what are we to draw from this partial punishment of sin? Is it not this? There is a time coming when God will stand fully forth as the avenger of sin. He will rectify all things then. These judgments are only the flashes from the mouth of the pit of that consuming fire which fills the place of darkness. Every calamity falling indiscriminately upon more and less guilty tells of a judgment beyond the grave. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God * * * and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." The judgment of time is a type of the judgment of eternity. When our Lord described the destruction of Jerusalem, he was looking far beyond to the dreadful day when the enemies of God would be destroyed forever.

3rd. The lessons of practical righteousness we are to learn from God's judgments.

1. God's judgments teach us the folly of hoping for impunity in sin—sin persisted in—sin not washed away in the blood of the Lamb. They wish to sin without fear who do not desire to see God in these calamities visiting sin with judgment. The man who looks for impunity says that God is overlooking sin. As certain as that these events are taking place, so certain is it that you will have to answer for your sin. It stands now in the book of God's remembrance against you unless you have re-

pented and have heard him saying, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

2. God's judgments are fitted to teach us the importance of seeking an interest in that only justifying righteousness which can satisfy a holy and justly offended God. God has provided a righteousness which can avail you now. Put on that righteousness which is Christ's; and, on the ground of it, you will be acquitted. Seek, then, an interest in Christ's righteousness. Suppose that God's judgments were to come into your family, to yourself, would you not desire to seek it? How can you tell but that they are at the very door? God's judgments, at least, are around you. Learn, therefore, righteousness.

3. God's judgments are fitted to teach us the necessity of holiness, of sanctification under the God with whom we have to do. Seek after righteousness, producing sanctification. God cannot be the friend of sin, even in his own people. Has he not been as strict with them as with his enemies? Look at his dealings with his ancient people, with David and many others. Perhaps God's judgments are abroad to punish you, believer, for sin, for departing from him. These judgments teach us the importance of making no delay in seeking not only justifying but also sanctifying righteousness.

III.

"*Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*" TITUS II. 13.

In connexion with this text let me direct your attention to three subjects of thought—

1st. What is the looking for the glorious appearing of Christ here referred to as a distinctive feature of Christian character.

1. The looking for implies the realization of Christ's

appearing in its certainty and importance. It is as certain as that Christ has risen again and ascended into his glory. There is nothing to be believed, in the present or in the past, if this is not to be believed. It is the grand central event upon which all that now goes on in the world spiritual must hang. We are apt to put many things in the place of this event. The mind of Father, Son and Spirit, are now directed towards it, as are the eyes of angels, of the redeemed, and even of the damned.

2. It implies the habitual anticipation of that coming. Every believer must learn to make this a subject of habitual contemplation. The natural man does not care, nor can he think, about it. Sometimes it thrusts itself upon his attention, but he is not at rest until it is forced away. It is often the subject of special meditation with the believer. He frequently sets himself to think of his Lord's appearing. It is never far away from his mind and heart.

3. It implies a rejoicing in and desire for the appearing of Jesus Christ. They who are looking must be looking rejoicingly to the event that is to consummate their happiness. To the natural man it can bring no joy.

4. It implies a preparing for and waiting for it. First, the believer will be seeking after evidence of his interest in Christ, and his meetness for his Saviour's appearing. Second, he will be led to direct all his conduct in life, to govern his actions by regard to that stupendous event. Third, he will be led to estimate all the circumstances that have occurred to him according to their bearing upon this one great event. Fourth, he will always be watching that he may not be taken by surprise at the coming of Christ, or, in other words, at the day of his death.

2nd. Some of the graces and attainments which are essential to, or promotive of, the blessed hope of Christ's coming.

The looking for Christ must result from the faith which

is the fruit of regeneration. What is faith! The substance of things hoped for, union to Christ, the act of partaking with him. Faith is the hand of the soul by which it lays hold on Christ. It is the medium through which all the commerce of the soul is carried on. Another essential is the hope which flows from faith. By the exercise or the evidence of his interest in Christ, the believer will be made to long for his full revelation. To these must be added constancy and diligence. Another grace essential to and promotive of a looking for Christ is love to him. In proportion to the intensity of the Christian's love will be his anxiety for his Lord's coming. From this springs a desire after perfect conformity to the Saviour's image, which is to be attained by contemplating him in the present and to be perfected only when he appears, and his people, seeing him as he is, are made like him.

3rd. Some practical directions for cultivating this looking for Christ.

Just cultivate carefully, devotedly, perseveringly, the graces promotive of it as they are found in the soul. Make it your business to live daily a life of faith on Christ. All the graces depend for their growth on exercise. The fundamental grace is faith. Faith will not grow without exercise. I would caution you against vague, indefinite hopes, about an interest in Christ. Some remain satisfied for years with such an indefinite hope. Seek the full assurance of hope; seek it earnestly. Resolve with your own hearts that, without a lingering doubt in your mind, you will say, "He is mine and I am his." Aim after livelier affections, warmer love to Christ. When we think of the love Christ has for his people, we wonder at the want of affection in them towards him. The love that many waters cannot quench is requited by that which a few drops may extinguish. In one word, love Christ and you will love his appearing.

You have made certain attainments in holiness. These

could not have been yours without some conflict; but are you not too easily satisfied with past effort and present attainment? It should be your daily business to seek attainments in holiness. Aim after perfect holiness. Be afraid of yourselves when you become satisfied with what is already yours. Think how far off you are from the standard laid down by Christ. Cultivate increasing zeal for his honour, especially by deeds of practical usefulness. There are men who have long made a profession of faith, and when you ask them what they are doing for Christ they answer that they go to church, pay their seat-rent, and give a trifle to religious objects for which they are called on to contribute. Nobody ever heard them speak of Christ or for Christ; they profane His day, neglect the opportunities afforded for serving Him, and getting good to their souls. How can they dare to look for Christ's appearing! Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh, and let this watching be ever accompanied with the blessed hope of the text.

IV.

"*And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*" REVELATION XIV. 3.

There is here presented to us one of the employments of heaven, singing a new song before the throne of God. Let it stir us up to enquiry into four particulars.

1st. The subject matter of this new song.

The great object of song in general is to give praise; of this song, in particular, to give praise to God. The subject matter of this song is all that God is, and all that in Christ he has done for the salvation of His church and people. The brightest displays of the grace of God shall appear

in the praises of God, as sung by those who are the reward of the Redeemer's travail of soul.

We may consider some of the particular themes on which the redeemed in heaven shall dwell. First, the sovereign, free, electing love of God which selected out of a fallen world them that are now gathered around the throne. Second, the great work of God in Christ by which he has purchased the eternal redemption of his church and people. Third, the way in which God called the elect to himself. They will sing how persevering grace persisted until it triumphed. The heir of glory, when lifted up on high, will never forget the history of his conversion. He will see then how persevering grace carried on the work, refusing to give up one of the elect. Fourth, the way by which God has led his people through the wilderness to the joy in which they are rejoicing. Fifth, the perfected salvation which they are now enjoying, and are to enjoy forever.

2nd. The feelings with which this song will be sung in heaven.

It would seem from the preceding verse that the redeemed had harps in their hands. We shall not dwell upon this. Firstly, it will be sung with deepest humility, giving a sweet tone to the song. Without humility there is no true grace. The more the believer advances in humility, the more meet does he become for glory. Secondly, it will be sung with the most ardent, burning love. The redeemed, made perfect in holiness, will be made perfect in love. Thirdly, it will be sung with feelings of rapturous and transporting joy. Oh, what will be the joy of those who surround the throne, when, encircled by the arms of his love, they sing the new song of the redeemed!

3rd. The sense in which this song may be called a new song.

It may well be called a new song since it will be sung in a new state. It will be such a song as the redeemed

could not sing on earth. It will differ from the believers' songs of earth in three important particulars. First, it will be a song for salvation perfected instead of begun. Second, it will be sung without the admixture of one discordant or jarring note. Third, it will be sung without interruption; and, as eternity rolls on, it will ever be the same.

4th. The reasons why none but the redeemed from the earth shall be allowed to join in this song.

There are two reasons. First, because the subject matter of the song will be the same as that which they and they alone have sung on earth. Second, because there will be a peculiarity in it which would render it inappropriate to others. The angels themselves will not be able to join in this song. They never fell, and hence never were redeemed. They cannot sing "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

5th. The characteristics of those who may warrantably hope to sing this song in heaven.

First, they are those who have learned to sing the new song upon the earth for a begun salvation. Second, they may warrantably hope to sing this song in heaven who are habitually preparing for heaven and longing for the perfect redemption which there awaits the believer.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. JOHN J. A. PROUDFOOT, D.D.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, LONDON, ONT.

A PLEA FOR CHRISTIAN LOVE AND WORK.

"*There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*"—Prov. xi., 24-25.

THE design of these statements is plainly to show the folly of selfishness or covetousness, and also its sinfulness, and to stimulate to self-denial and diligent effort for the good of others. That selfishness is not the condition of prosperity, is evident from the fact that many scatter, or benevolently distribute worldly goods, and yet increase in substance; and that others, in extreme penuriousness, withhold more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. These are plain historical facts, amply attested by common observation and experience. The form of expression here used is intended to convey the idea that such cases are numerous, and that

they are sufficient to prove that selfishness does not lead to prosperity.

Now, the question is,—How is this to be accounted for? How does it happen that many generously distribute money, and yet prosper; and that others are penurious to the extent of injustice, and yet do not prosper? The reason is, that the providence of God lies at the back of visible or secondary causes, and controls every thing. Hence the 25th verse is not like the 24th, the statement of an historical fact; but it is an encouraging promise to the benevolent. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." This is the statement of Him to whom "the earth and the fulness thereof belong," and whose providence rules over and directs every thing.

The subject contained in our text is that "*Doing good to others is, by the blessing of God, the means of promoting one's own welfare of a corresponding nature.*"

I do not suppose that this truth, however well established, will prove an adequate antidote to selfishness, or an adequate stimulus to benevolence. Still, such statements are useful in their own place. Although the pious, when doing good to others, are not governed by regard to their own interests, yet they are entitled to the subordinate satisfaction of knowing that God, who is himself infinitely benevolent, has attached true prosperity and happiness to a life of generous labour and self-denial for the good of others. And the selfish may, by such statements, be stimulated to do good, and may have their minds opened to admit a higher principle of action. But it is needless to invent apologies for enforcing motives which God has been pleased to employ, and which He may be expected to bless.

For the sake of illustration and proof, we shall view the subject in relation to both temporal and spiritual prosperity.

I. In temporal things it is often seen that the benevolent, by doing much good with their substance, do not

diminish their resources. Such persons are not poorer than others who hoard up money, or spend it on their own gratification. If you divide men into two classes, the prosperous and those who are not so, you will not find that the covetous constitute the one class, and the generous or benevolent the other. And if you view persons who have become either poor or rich, you cannot prove that they have been impoverished by their benefactions, or enriched by their penuriousness. Indeed, it frequently happens that the benevolent prosper more than the selfish. Hence no apology can be offered for covetous conduct; for, apart from its hatefulness, it frequently defeats itself. So that, upon the whole, the covetous man would be more likely to gain the object of his sordid ambition by the practice of benevolence than by the practice of selfishness.

But this is putting the case very feebly and inadequately. Those who benevolently scatter, who are liberal and water others, often derive very great benefit from it. Their reputation is benefited by it. No one likes to deal with the covetous. Such persons are prone to separate right from wrong by a very narrow boundary, on the confines of which they are always to be found. They are open to the suspicion of withholding more than is meet. Now this is ruinous to any man's success in business. So well is this understood, that worldly men are exceedingly anxious to maintain a good reputation. Shrewd men of this class are often to be found contributing largely, and even generously, to pious and benevolent enterprises, thinking it scarcely possible to purchase a good reputation at too high a price. Thus they are compelled to pay an involuntary tribute of respect to benevolence, as a condition of worldly prosperity.

The satisfaction, too, which the pious experience in well doing, is so great as to stimulate to forethought, diligence, and perseverance, that they may have to give to him that needeth. These are also conditions of success.

Their pleasure in doing good is so great that they cheerfully spend time in contriving and elaborating plans with a view to this end. Hard labour is lightened by the benevolent affection which sustains it; even drudgery is ennobled by it. The enjoyment, which such persons find in labours of this kind, is so great that they never grow weary of them. Nor are they tempted to resort to expensive and selfish amusements. They have the singleness of purpose, and perseverance, and pleasure in their work which characterised Him who went about doing good.

Besides, God can so bless a benevolent man's enterprises that they shall greatly prosper. "God is able to make all grace to abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work, being enriched in everything to all bountifulness." "All that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all: and in thine hand is power and might: and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." When you take into account the providence of God, which is the chief factor in the sum of human success, you perceive at once the solution of the apparent paradox, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." You see, also, that God is able, without any unusual or miraculous interference with the course of human affairs, to fulfil His promise, "The liberal soul shall be made fat."

But if the substance of the pious man should not be sensibly increased—if it should be even diminished by his liberality—yet it will be enriched with the blessing of God. Money, and lands, and houses, and fine clothing cannot confer happiness, or even satisfaction. "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." If a small amount of this world's goods,

with the blessing of God, produce contentment, it will be far better than a great estate without that blessing, and which yields no satisfaction. Thus a good man may become richer without any increase of his property, because there may be in it an increase of that quality which, though invisible, imparts to riches their true value.

On the other hand, it ought to be remembered that, if men do not use piously and benevolently what God gives them, or rather intrusts to their care, it will do them harm rather than good. If increasing wealth makes a man proud or vain, it does him very great harm. If it renders him sordid, if it engrosses his affections and makes him worldly, if it leads him into extravagance and into sinful pleasures, it will prove his utter ruin in the end, and drown him in destruction and perdition. So hateful is selfishness to God infinitely benevolent, that all the laws of His government are against it, and must ultimately defeat it. Indeed, nothing will save men from the mischief which wealth is fitted to do to its possessor, but the cultivation and exercise of great and diffusive benevolence. Prayers and tears alone will not prove an antidote to the debasing and hardening influence of increasing riches. The heart of the man who is growing rich can be kept soft only by profuse scattering. Increasing liberality is the only means by which, with God's blessing, exemption from the blighting and debasing influence of increasing riches can be purchased.

Viewing the subject, then, in every aspect in which it can be presented, it must be admitted that, so far as temporal things are concerned, doing good to others is the means of promoting one's own welfare of a corresponding nature. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself."

II. But, in spiritual matters, the subject is of far deeper importance, and is capable of indefinite proof and illustration. Suppose that a pious man should contribute liberally for the spread of the Gospel, will not this tend to

promote his spiritual welfare? To a pious and philanthropic mind, nothing seems more desirable than that the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. This alone can, by the accompanying influences of the Holy Spirit, water the arid wastes of the world, and clothe them with verdure and beauty, and make the desert blossom as the rose. Now, the pious and benevolent man, who contributes intelligently and abundantly of his substance for this purpose, will be led to think much of the Gospel, and of what it has done for him. He will be led to think of the great sacrifice of Christ which it reveals, and of His unsearchable riches which it offers to poor sinners, and of the grace of the Father in giving His dear Son, and of the great and tender love of Christ in laying down His life for us. He will naturally think of the life of Christ on earth, which reveals such generous self-denial and self-sacrifice for the good of others as the universe never saw before. He will also, in the sweet consciousness of his own reconciliation to God, and of his personal interest in Christ, be able to view with the deepest compassion those who are living without God and without hope. But surely such thoughts and feelings must greatly edify his soul. It is not easy to see how a Christian can give intelligently and liberally for the cause of Christ without such thoughts and feelings; and with these it is less easy to see how he can refrain from giving liberally not his money only, but also his prayers and tears, and, if need be, himself. Thus, while he is giving as God enables him for the spread of the Gospel, he will receive unsought spiritual nourishment and comfort, which all the wealth of the world could not buy, and which it would be presumptuous to speak of purchasing with money. Contributions, for the sake of the Gospel, are thus a precious means of grace, which is indispensable to the Christian's edification. We must, therefore, be permitted to enter our most solemn protest against the employment of unworthy and even indirect means to procure money for

religious purposes—means by which the object of giving is kept in the back ground, and by which religious persons are deprived of the edification connected with intelligent Christian beneficence.

Suppose that the Christian should, in his own proper sphere, strive to impart saving knowledge to others, will not this benefit him? He will naturally be led to study the truth more carefully, that he may be able to instruct others. He will discover that there is nothing better fitted to reveal to a person his own ignorance, and to furnish a powerful stimulus to study, than an attempt to teach. He will thus acquire a deeper knowledge of the truth than he would otherwise have attained; and he may expect that God will graciously teach him when seeking to teach others. Indeed, God has connected with the acquisition of all knowledge—especially of saving knowledge—an earnest desire to impart it to others. And if this desire be suppressed or deprived of scope for exercise, progress in knowledge will be arrested. Hence no better means can be employed to keep up our interest in Scripture studies, and to promote our growth in Scripture knowledge, and to procure the superior teaching of the Holy Spirit for ourselves, than to strive to impart to others the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, to know whom is life eternal.

Suppose that the Christian should seek to communicate to others a knowledge of his own religious experience for their good—which, in certain circumstances, he may modestly do—will not this benefit him? Will it not lead him to think much of God's gracious dealings with his own soul, of the forbearance which God exercised towards him, of the long time Christ stood at the door of his heart seeking admission there, "till mighty grace his heart subdued, to teach him 'God is love.'" Will it not lead him to examine carefully his own heart, and the evidences of grace in it, and the great things God has done for him? Will not this warm his heart, and stimulate his religious

affections, and put a new song in his mouth, even praise to our God? Should the persons he seeks to benefit be true Christians, he will probably receive as much as he is able to give, and will thus have his faith strengthened and his brotherly love greatly increased.

Suppose he should be instrumental in bringing others to Christ,—should be a vessel in which grace is conveyed to them,—how great will his profit and his joy be! He will feel that he is doubly blessed,—blessed in receiving grace himself, and in conveying it to others. He will thus be enabled to perform the most benevolent work that any man on earth can perform to friend or brother—a work to which God has attached a peculiar kind of satisfaction and delight, which cannot be described, but must be experienced to be known. He will feel that, even if he should do no more, he has not lived in vain.

But why should we suppose cases? We can never exhaust the subject, nor can we explain all the ways in which God can feed the liberal soul, and in which he can water those who water others. He knows all our wants, and he has blessings in abundance to supply them with; and He knows all the avenues by which the heart can be reached, and through which He can convey peace and joy inexpressible. He can give gold tried in the fire, and white raiment, and hidden manna, and a crown of life that fadeth not away.

In conclusion, let us endeavour to realize and act upon the truth which we have been considering.

If all the members of a congregation were thus liberal, and striving to do good to one another, what prosperity might be enjoyed! What treasures of knowledge, and religious experience, and spiritual comfort would become common property! There are none so poor that they cannot add something to this store. The aggregate of spiritual knowledge and experience would be very great, and the possession of it would make the church truly a heavenly place—most delightful to her members, and

most attractive to those who are not, but who need such an asylum in a cold and selfish world.

If this principle were acted on, a new incentive to effort would be furnished to many. They would seek connection with the church, not merely for their own benefit, but also and primarily to do good to others. They would attend church, and prayer meeting, and sabbath school, with the view of promoting the welfare and extension of the Church, and the glory of Christ. All the gifts possessed by individuals—and which are truly the property of the Church—would be fully utilized; and the Church, instead of being an inert mass, would be truly a living body, of which Christ is the Head, and thus would edify itself in love.

If the Church will not act on this principle, she will neither become more prosperous, nor will she be able to retain the small amount of prosperity which she enjoys. She must cease to lavish every thing on herself, building magnificent churches, painting their walls and ceilings, carpeting their floors, providing artistically fine music, and spending extravagant sums of money on sensational preachers, who please a vitiated and vulgar taste, but can neither instruct the mind nor stimulate the conscience, nor awaken proper religious affection in the heart. While her desires and her wealth flow in these channels, she will not be watered with showers from heaven. Even the clouds, which seem laden with blessings, will pass over her, as over a sandy desert, which has nothing to attract them. But let her strive in earnest to do her own work, to water the arid wastes which lie at her doors, and the still more arid wilderness of the heathen world, and then she will hear the "sound of abundance of rain," and the very windows of heaven will be opened, and a blessing poured out that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

If any one is poor in spiritual things and weak in faith, might he not profitably inquire what he is doing for the

good of others, instead of blaming his pastor or his brethren? Let him begin to labour for the welfare of the Church and for the glory of Christ; let him countenance regularly all the public religious services of the church; let him, with a humble and contrite heart, attend regularly the prayer meeting; let him go to the sabbath school, and beg, as a special favour, to be permitted to teach the smallest class, or even to perform the humblest office, and then he will begin to learn what that meaneth, "The liberal soul shall be made fat."

Selfishness is the curse of the Church as well as of the world. If it could be proved to lead to ultimate prosperity and happiness, our belief that the universe is under the government of an infinitely benevolent God would be terribly shaken. It must be rooted out of the Church, or the Church will never prosper, nor will she ever be able to accomplish the great and benevolent work intrusted to her. It must be rooted out of the heart of the professed Christian, or he never will be sanctified, nor admitted into the everlasting abode of peace and love. Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." David said, when describing the pious and truly prosperous man—and the Apostle Paul repeats his words—"He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour."

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. DR. JENNINGS,

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"*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.*" Proverbs xiv., 12.

MAN naturally wishes to do as he pleases. He may in society be submissive enough, in general, to constituted authority: but, notwithstanding, he would rather control than be commanded. The child in the family may obey parental rule, and in the school submit to the teacher's regulations; but the first indications of the young mind sufficiently show that it is the power of authority, and not mere inclination, that causes obedience. In business, the youth, if he had his own way, would rather order than serve. In the civil state, a man,—if he could do it,—would prefer being the magistrate to the subject, and would rather make laws than keep those which others enact for him. All kinds of governments are restraints on the natural will and inclinations. There is no child in the family, no scholar in the school, no subject in the state, who does

not show sometimes—and perhaps far more frequently feels than he shows it—that it would be much more congenial to his nature if he were allowed at all times to do as he pleases. Law and government, then, are everywhere necessary, to keep our race from a universal anarchy, and from all the destructive consequences which would result, were each human being to be his own legislator and his own monarch in respect to what he considered to be his rights and his duties. We go a step higher, into the province of religion, and the same truth holds equally good, if, indeed, it be not more manifested that man naturally wishes in this to do as he pleases: to make his own theology, to write his own moral law, to be his own prophet, to reveal what he believes to be the will of God, and, in short, to make his own Bible, and settle the sure rule for his own conduct, and the conditions of his own accountability and futurity. True, we do not find many going so far in practice, for, were that the case, then there would be one universal riot of infidelity; but such is the tendency of the carnal heart, and it is only kept in check from open avowal, on the part of many who are not Christians, by the force of public opinion; and on the part of those who are Christians, the rebel heart is converted and renewed, the mind is enlightened and educated by the Word and Spirit, and the will is brought into subjection to the power of divine grace.

Now, it may be said that I am giving human nature a very bad character. Well, in its native state, is it not all depraved, and what good character can it have? It is such the Bible gives it when it says that mankind, by nature, are aliens,—enemies to God in their minds and by wicked works; that there are none righteous,—no, not one; that none are born the friends of God; that none come naturally to love His truth, His law, and His service; that conversion is an essential for each, and that without it none shall enter the kingdom of Heaven. I grant that there are degrees of alienation and moral op-

position in point of fact, and degrees of it even constitutionally, for some are born, it would seem, with a blacker heart and a more perverse will than others ; still the very mildest degree of depravity which any one has, places him as an opponent to the will and service of God. And from theory and assertion, respecting depravity, go to fact. Look at men's lives,—at the true state of their desires, feelings and doings,—and unquestionably, as respects religion, the natural prompting is to lead them to think, believe and act just as they please ; to be directed by themselves ; to take the way that seems right in their own eyes, and most congenial to their own inclinations.

When Columbus set sail from the port of Palos, nearly four hundred years ago, in search of what he conceived to be the western Indies, and went forth to brave the unknown perils of an unknown sea ; when there never had been a voyager before him to tell him his experience ; when he knew not the extent of ocean he had to cross, and, indeed, whether there was such a land beyond or not ; when it was all guess-work with him then, he had no alternative but to take that course which seemed right to himself—for he was left entirely to his own judgment,—and to proceed on a voyage in complete geographical darkness ; but now that this western continent has been discovered,—now that the width of the Atlantic has been measured to an inch,—now that the coasts are known, with their reefs, and rocks, and refuges,—now that the sea has been ploughed through its every wave,—would he be a wise mariner who would go forth on the swelling deep, to take the way of his own fancy and caprice, and despise all scientific instruments and charts for navigation, and the information of those who had gone before, and who left their success as their testimony how to succeed, or the warning, by their fate, that followers may beware ! And so it is on the great ocean of life,—that which has a shore in time, at which infancy embarks, and another shore in eternity, on which all are either landed

or stranded; and if, Columbus like, each, could do no more than make a conjecture respecting the future, and of a world of life there, then there might be no blame, because man could do no better than follow the twinkling ray of his own reason, and the impulse of his own disposition. But now that we have the revealed will of God, when the only way to heaven is through the Crucified,—lifted up on Calvary, that He may draw all men unto Him—and, better far than beacon to the anxious mariner, He throws forth His clear and steady light on the world; then, the duty of every one who would seek for truth and heaven,—of every one who sets the right value on his own soul, and who is impressed with the solemnity of living well and of dying well,—is not to take the way that seemeth right to the dictates of the natural mind and the sinful heart, but that which is declared by heavenly wisdom,—that which is open for the human race, and which is marked illustriously by the words, the works, the steps, the cross and the crown of Jesus.

The text might allow the consideration of the many phases of human life and character, and how multitudes, by their immoralities, and in defiance of religion, not only shorten their lives, but expose themselves to the judgment of God, who hath concluded wrath on every son of man that doeth evil. The proverb, in its first intention, may have had these as the main purpose; but it can as forcibly be brought to bear, in a religious point of view, on Opinions as on Conduct.

THERE IS A WAY THAT SEEMETH RIGHT TO A MAN IN REFERENCE TO HIS RELIGIOUS OPINIONS, BUT THE END THEREOF IS THE WAY OF SPIRITUAL DEATH. The fact I started with is fully supported by the diversity of sentiments, in and about religion, which are entertained. If men were less self-willed, and less inclined to follow the bent of their own inclinations, we should find far more obedience to God's revealed word. Whence come doubt and unbelief, and the many notions that are held? They

do not always arise from downright rejection of the Bible, or because, after examination, the Scriptures are considered to be untrue ; neither are they the result of conviction from sincere enquiry ; but because the religion of the Bible does not suit them ; it is not in harmony with their minds and conduct, and they will not conform to it. And this, also, will be found as an inner reason with many, that they dislike the claims of the Bible, which gives them no choice, but demands an intelligent, yet submissive faith. They desire to organize a scheme of salvation for themselves.

Look at some of these opinions. ATHEISM is the boldest and the blackest form. I really know not if there be, in the secret of his heart, such a man as an atheist,—one who denies the being of a God : one who sees all creation and providence to be mere chance : one who sees wisdom without mind : who sees works without power, and who sees order without intelligence. But be there the man or not who honestly holds it, there is such which some say they believe. They blot a living God out from all His works, and behold a universe without an architect ; they see life, but deny that it has an eternal fountain ; and they look on the order and the processions of the stars in their courses above, and the seasons in their regularity below, but they deny that there is an all-powerful will controlling them all. That is a way which seems right to those who, enthroning their reason as supreme, reject instruction from the divine oracles, and go to a creed that believes in effects without a cause, and of workmanship without a worker; who leave the light, even of reason, as well as of revelation, and plunge into a blackness than which there can be nothing more forbidding and dismal. "The fool," and only the fool, "hath said in his heart, there is no God." Ah ! the present and the future : denying a God *now;* confronting God *then.*

DEISM, with its varying shades of belief, and PANTHE-

ism, which makes all the universe God, may be classed as one. There are those who claim to have got out of the fogs of Bible superstitions, and found a more excellent way; who have a God, and they imagine that by their view He is greatly exalted, as they make Him so near and around them that He can be seen and touched and heard every day. They see Him in the sky, with its shining worlds; they see Him on the wide sea and the broad land; they hear His mighty voice in the thunders among the clouds, in the roar of the hurricane, in the rippling of the stream, and in the whisperings of the summer breeze. They read the word of God in the blaze of the sun, in the diamond light of the stars, in the large letters of the everlasting hills, and in the small print of the snow-drop, the primrose, and the lily of the field. They have God in what we call His works; but they deny Him in the Bible. They can read nature as they please, and give it what voice they choose; but not so with the Book; and, therefore, to be free from the difficulty, they ignore the doctrines of revelation, and count them as, at best, the fancies of superstitious visionaries. Nature is alike their divinity and their highest manual of devotion. Now nature, assuredly, is one of God's two Books, and it should be read through and through, as far as the keen eye of research can do it; but still it can only be read aright in the light of the other, which opens with a grand, and an illuminated title page;—"In the beginning God Created the Heaven and Earth."

These, however, may be taken as the very extremes of opinions hostile to Christianity; the wild and proud thinkings of those who would be a law and oracle to themselves, and who spurn the need of humbly sitting at the feet of a teacher sent from God. But there are those among us—even church-going people, who bear an air of Christianity about them,—who profess most readily to accept of the Bible as the supreme standard of their faith

and practice, and yet, in the light of evangelical religion, are pursuing ways which are perilous to their souls.

THERE IS BELIEF,—an avowed assent to the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures. How many there are who speak of this—who trust to this? They are no sceptics; they have been taught that the Bible is true; they have read it more or less, and they accept it as true; but they cannot say from a heart's deep and holy experience "How love I thy law; it is my study all the day;" "Thy statutes are the men of my council;" "Thy word is more precious unto me than thousands of gold and silver." They are strangers to all this; but intellectually—with what little serious thought they have given, and with what educational influences they have come under, they feel it well—a kind of safe thing—to have a religion; and that of the Bible is accepted as such by them. But there it rests. It is near akin to the religion of devils, without even their trembling. It is the "faith without works that is dead, being alone." It is the assent of the mind, but the keeping back of the heart, and will, and life. It is like the man having in his hand the plans and specifications for a noble structure, but who never lays a stone,—who reads from the supreme Architect what he should be and could be, but who has no earnest desire that he himself should be built up a habitation of God, through the spirit. This religion of mere BELIEF is the statue in all its beautiful symmetry, but without heart, and warmth, and life. It is religion self-deceiving, having a name to live in Christian society when the soul is not alive to God, and the fruits of the body are not given to righteousness. It is religion on the lips, but godlessness at the heart. It is religion; but it is like a river in winter, that is frozen to its very bed; it is like water turned into ice. It is like a man in stucco or in stone. It is dead, and he who trusts to it utterly fails to comprehend the earnest, practical nature of faith on the Son of God,—a living, loving faith, which urges him on to more abounding in personal holi-

ness,—a faith which not only holds fast the truth, but also holds it forth in himself as a living epistle, to be seen and read of all men,—a faith which lives by Christ, and a faith that lives to Christ,—and going through the world, following closely in the steps of the Great Master, in being good and in doing good.

THERE IS REPENTANCE OR SORROW. There is a way that seemeth good unto a man, that if he repent of his sins, even at the last moment before death, his salvation will be secured. Repentance is one of the first fruits of grace; it is the first step the prodigal turns homeward and the sinner takes heavenward; but if, instead, it be made the whole of duty, the whole of his religion, it is then the repentance that worketh death. It is a dulling, deadening of the soul to Christ and righteousness. It is looking back on the past to try to blot it out, and not on the present and the future for a new life. Are we only to repent of sin? That may be done from the most selfish motives —because we have suffered temporal evils, or because we fear them; and yet there may be no hatred of sin, and turning unto God with a full purpose after a holy obedience. The worst man in our penitentiary is sorry that he is there, and gladly would have pardon; and yet it may be only because of the imprisonment, not the crime, that he has a kind of repentance. He may be a bad man in his heart still. A few months ago, I was called to attend a young man in his death-sickness. He was naturally hearty and generous, but his heartiness and generosity led him into far, and fast, and fatal courses. He felt so vile that he would not pray,—that it was of no use,—that he had been so wicked as not to be worth saving. I asked him if he had ever repented of his sins after some outburst of evil doing? No. Then, after some excess, and loss of character, money and health, did you never repent of it? No. Then, after some carouse, and penniless, and miserable, did you not bethink yourself, and feel very *sorry?* Oh yes, many, many a time; but *that was not*

repentance. Just so. He drew the distinction well. But even repentance, I fear, is the ruling confidence with many. They have repented, and, therefore, they will be saved; or, when they lie on a death-bed and repent, they think that all will be well with them; and thus they make their own act, and the state of their own feelings, the means of salvation. By what they do, they hope to obtain the favour of God. Now, the Gospel way is—salvation only through Jesus Christ. Real repentance must spring from the soul's sight of Jesus, as well as the sight of sin; and salvation, not because of what we have done, or can do, but because of what Christ has already accomplished for us, and is able to do in behalf of all who believe in His name; and repentance, to be worth anything, must be accompanied by a saving faith, and after a godly sort. Peter repented bitterly for denying his Lord, and he never did it again; and not only never did it again, but bravely and unweariedly he preached Him wherever he could.

THERE IS MORALITY. Some have this their way for salvation. It seems right to them. They think they can do all themselves,—that the Bible is good enough to tell them right from wrong; that Jesus Christ was a wise teacher and a pure pattern; and that, if they obey His instructions and follow His example, then all the religious duty of life is performed. Some, even, do not examine Bible morality very eagerly, nor follow the pattern of Jesus very closely. Their religion is to maintain a respectable character in society. They consider it proper to be just, truthful, and benevolent; to help on the world in its schemes for secular prosperity, and in its objects for moral reformation. That is their idea of a religious life. Now, I find no fault with morality, in so far as the moral man is a better citizen than the profligate, and as it is better, in a worldly view, for himself that he should be so; but, in a religious aspect, it is not enough. A man may be moral from fear of reproach; or he may be so from the

desire to gain popular favour; or he may be so from pride, or a high sense of self-respect and of right; and still the love of Christ may have no influence on him, or divine law in the least constrain him. He may trust in his moral goodness, and come, Nicodemus-like, with much of a noble nature and of good conduct; still must it be said to him, as it was to that ruler of the Jews, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Or, like the young enquirer who came to Christ, he may have a lovely disposition, an unblemished reputation, and the law, as before his fellow men, he may have kept from his youth; still, all that will not do, for the Lord must have him to be both a believer and a follower, and unless he be both he cannot be a Christian. Morality, in the Scripture sense, is holiness, or works of righteousness, which spring from conversion; from being born again to serve the living God; from love to Christ constraining us to love Him and to live to Him in the keeping of His commandments. Saul of Tarsus was a moralist, and he was so from regard to the law, and from pride in himself; but Paul was a moralist of a far higher order, as all he was and all he did became a self-consecration because of Him who loved him and gave Himself for him.

> "Thou bleeding Lamb!
> The best morality is love of Thee."

THERE IS A GOOD INTENTION. This is a way that seems good to very many hearers of the Gospel, but who are not under its saving power. They care not for being in earnest about a religious life *now*, but they have no desire to despise it; yea, they wish to be accommodated on the Sabbath day by hearing the kindly voice of celestial wisdom. They do not mean that the time shall never come when they shall be Christians; they only put off—they only delay, as they have something else to think about for the present; but there is the good intention, and so

they go on in life contentedly, because they can fall back on the good purpose that is stored away in some nook of the heart. The Word of God may appeal; the Holy Ghost may say "To-day harden not your heart," but the reply is, "See, the heart is not hard, for there lies in it, for *future* use, this good intention." Christ, and faith, and love, and service, are all there,—may be—but the heart is made the sepulchre, in which they lie wrapped around with the grave clothes of the spiritually dead. This way seemeth right. They would be afraid to be unbelievers,—afraid of dying in an unsaved state,—afraid altogether to neglect reading the Bible and attending on ordinances; and surely that is a great deal in their favour, and on which God will look with complacency; and if, indeed, they should die unexpectedly, it will surely stand them in good stead on the day of account that they, at any rate, had the good intention. O! can you tell me of a greater and more prevailing delusion than this. It comes orderly to our churches, though there is no real devotion; it stands or kneels in formal reverence in prayer, though there is no warm up-going of the cry of the soul for pardon, mercy and grace; it turns its voice to sing, and the sense likes the music, if the music is good, but there is no calling on the soul, and all that is within, to praise and magnify the Lord; it sits respectfully to hear the preaching of the Gospel, and may be is pleased with it as an intellectual entertainment, or an orthodox setting forth of its shibboleth, but it has no purpose, no inclination, no time to receive, *now*, the truth in the love of it. That is the man who is to be a Christian sometime. He takes his occasional look at the King in His beauty, and the land that is afar off, and then turns away to mind earthly things; but also with a quiet satisfaction that he did well that he looked, and was better far than so many who had never looked at all. Truly has it been said, that "the way to hell is paved with good intentions." Many have their convenient sea-

son to be Christians, but it is never *now*. It is coming, but always in the distance. It is when the fortune is made, and when they can say, now, soul, take thine ease; or it is in a time of sickness, when they shall be penitent and pious; or it is in old age, when the earthly tabernacle will begin to give way, that they shall seek for a building of God; and thus they miscalculate life in its solemn duties, and misapply privilege, mercy and grace! And so ten thousands in our churches dream on, and slip steadily and smoothly down in the way that seemeth right to them, till they come to the end—and the knell of life is struck—and, then, it is too late. O, men and brethren, beware, and hearken to the voice of divine love in all its warnings, pleadings, and invitations, when it says, "This is the way: walk ye in it." Behold that love in Jesus: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

Some other points might be taken up for illustration, did space permit—such as

THERE IS A TRUSTING TO A GODLY PARENTAGE. It is indeed the highest of all pedigree that any one can claim, that he had truly Christian parents, but still he may not be like them. A reliance on this for Divine favour, is just the Pharisee of old speaking in another form; "We have Abraham to our father." It is Saul of Tarsus boasting in his Hebrew blood.

BORN AND BAPTIZED A CHRISTIAN! We hear it sometimes, "I was born a Churchman"—"I was born a Presbyterian." Born! Every one is born with a sinful nature and *in* no church. Baptized! There is no baptismal regeneration. Born *again*—baptized by the Holy Ghost, makes the Christian.

AN ATTENTIVE MEMBER OF THE CHURCH. It was of old, it is very likely now, that many come as God's people, and yet their hearts are far from Him. "They are not all Israel who are called Israel." Real union with the Church, consists in union with the Church's HEAD.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in ME, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without ME ye can do nothing."

OBSERVANCE OF PRAYER. A great privilege and a holy duty! Still, in the family it may rank no higher than a part of the discipline; and in the closet be no more than a selfish conciliation of the good will of God. The genuine Christian will never trust to his prayers, but in HIM to whom he prays. There are many who ask but receive not, because they ask amiss. They ask but do not *want*—or they may want but do not *wait*. There are not a few, so-called Christians, who tell *most* lies in their prayers!

IN CONCLUSION. There is a way that seemeth right to a man in his *Practices*, but the end thereof is the way of death. There are some who lay the blame on the doctrines of the Bible as the reason why they cannot believe it; but if the real truth were told, and their mode of life examined, it would be far more frequently found that the cause lies in the precepts of Scripture as opposed to their ruling desires and passions. Many wish to accommodat religion to practice, and they like that kind of creed which permits them to have the easiest morals.—The human heart prompts and fosters much that is sinful, and still, with all deceitfulness, would try to cover it over with the garb of morality, and not unfrequently even with that of piety. The man of Moab, to gain an end, will try to speak the language of Israel. But it is alike the duty and interest of a man not merely to look at the position he may take, as respects religious opinion, or the practice he pursues, but to look well to the consequences. When we travel on a road, we observe not only the immediate steps we take, but whither they are carrying us. Are we on the right road? Are we going to, or from, our desired destination? So I ask believers and unbelievers, whither are you bound? What are you? Where are you? You are travellers

over life's stage; and are you on the broad road that leadeth to destruction, or on the narrow one that leadeth unto life? If on the broad way—wide for every opinion and every godless practice—hear the call of divine and gracious solicitude for you: "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die"; but if on the narrow way, then go on, from strength even unto strength, making mention of the loving kindness of the Lord, even of His only. Think well, then, about what you are doing. It is not simply the sowing—the wild oats may be sown widely and thickly—but there is the crop, the harvesting, and, therefore, sow that from which you would like to gather: "for he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

Men have what may be called their *Constitutional* sins—those of temperament and general disposition; and they may allow themselves full scope. They may plead that it is right to do so. They may plead "the passions wild and strong" in the nature God has given them, and that, therefore, they are not accountable. They may plead a mental tendency to doubt, and that, therefore, they are not to be blamed for scepticism. There is no vice or iniquity that may not be perpetrated, or defiant opinion to God or man that may not be held, under such a plea as that. Is a man inclined to doubt, and must he doubt on, instead of searching the Scriptures, in full integrity, and proving all things, and holding fast that which is good! Is he constitutionally passionate, licentious, false, or vindictive, and is he to give his nature full vent, and allow his original sin to grow, and gather strength from its exercise; then he would become a fear to others, a dread to himself, and rapidly run his course to the grave—and, for the sake of the living, it would be well when he is in it. But rather ought he not to control a fierce will and fiery passion by the reason God has given him, and that reason enlightened and sanctified by the divine Word and

Spirit ; and to seek and pray for a new creation in himself, of heart, and will, and purpose, to the likeness of Christ, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

The Gospel of Christ meets us as we are—and as we are it takes us to Jesus ; and then no longer to be as we have been, but to receive the clean heart,—to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and to prove what is holy, and acceptable, and well pleasing in the sight of God. Come then, and come *now*, with one heart and will, to Jesus. He is THE WISDOM calling the erring world to Himself—and His ways are pleasantness and His paths are peace ; and even though these run through the Marahs and Ramas of the bitternesses and sorrows of life, yet they rise up at length on the goodly hills of the land of Beulah, and terminate in the City of our God.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

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"*The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*" Isaiah xxxv, 10.

TO return to one's native country, after a long absence, is one of the most joyful events of human life. It is one which it is delightful to have in prospect, and which it is still more delightful to be, at length, permitted to realize. There is something about the land of one's birth which renders it unspeakably dear to the human heart, so that we are delighted to behold once more its cliffs from the bosom of the deep, to tread again its beloved shores, and to revisit scenes associated in our minds with the recollections and the intimacies, the amusements and the occupations of other, and, we may often think, of happier years. The pleasures of the return do more than compensate the pains of the departure,

and for a while we seem to forget the long interval of absence that has elapsed, borne from object to object with a bounding heart, and ready to pour from our lips the music of an exuberant joy. But if such be the feelings with which a single individual returns to the land of his fathers, what must be the feelings which animate a throng of returning individuals, a multitude amounting to hundreds or thousands, whose countenances beam on each other with mutual satisfaction, and whose tongues cannot but express to each other the all prevailing joy. Just fancy such a throng crowding the deck of some gallant vessel, which, after a long voyage, has almost reached her desired destination; or rather imagine them toiling up some steep ascent, and now arrived at the summit from which they can view the valleys and the hills, the fields and the homes of their fatherland, and the imagination which can distinctly picture such a scene is the only true interpreter of the joys which such a scene actually realized must excite. Each individual bosom beats and glows with a pleasure inspired by the delightful objects thus surveyed, while each feels a new pleasure, or at least a mighty addition to his pleasure, from the intense sympathy of all around him; and the general outburst of feelings, which can no longer be suppressed, tells, emphatically, of the happiness of returning to one's native land. But the Jews, on returning from the Babylonish captivity, would not only feel all this, they would be animated by feelings of a higher and still more impressive order. The land of Judah was not only dear to them as the scene of their birth, it was still dearer to them as the scene of their religious solemnities. They, or their fathers, had been banished from it by the just judgment of their offended God. They had dragged out long years of a most miserable captivity in Babylon, and now they were returning to their own land, full of hopes that He who had banished them would again lift upon them the light of His countenance, and make the land smile in the sunshine of His

favour. They expected again to enjoy the special presence of Jehovah in the ordinances of His own institution; and in Zion, the city of their solemnities, they again looked for refreshing communion as of old with the angel of the covenant, with the Holy One of Israel. The temple would be again frequented, the altar would again exhibit the sacrificial lambs, and the blood of atonement would be annually sprinkled before the mercy seat.

Not to dwell on this picture, however, for the thoughts of the rapt seer of Israel are evidently transported in this passage beyond the return from the Babylonish captivity, and his language depicts a still more delightful scene; we conceive the text is clearly to be regarded as descriptive of Gospel days, of deliverance from a more oppressive bondage, even that of sin, and of our joyful return to a better city, of which the earthly Zion was but the type. In this sense, *the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.* Understanding the text thus, we ask—

First, *Who* are they that return to Zion with songs? The answer of our text is *the ransomed of the Lord.* This is their title, and what does it import?

It imports that they were once *in a state of bondage, in a condition of abject misery.* The figure, as we have seen, is taken from the degrading practice of slavery. Those, who have seen slaves in their most debased condition, have given us a fearful picture of these wretched beings —of the spectacle which they presented when exposed in the market for sale, their heads hanging down on their breasts, in perfect helplessness; their hands chained lest they should attempt to escape, passing from one master to another, to endure perhaps more unnatural treatment than before. Their minds were fettered no less than their bodies, no ray of light being permitted to enter which might reveal to them the depth of degradation in which they were sunk, or which might elevate them to any considerable extent above the beasts that perish. A worse

and a more degrading slavery than this did the ransomed of the Lord once endure. We were the slaves of Satan, the most cruel and relentless of slave-masters, for we had sold ourselves into his service. We were the victims of the lusts and corruptions of our own wicked hearts, for to these we had bowed our necks, and yielded a willing homage. We were under the curse of the righteous law of God, for we had broken all its requirements, and entailed all its awful penalties. We were dead in trespasses and sins. We were chained hand and foot by sin, and had no power, and no inclination, to save ourselves. We were the children of wrath even as others, because along with all others, we were the children of disobedience. Such was the miserable plight of the ransomed of the Lord,—slaves, victims, ungodly, self-ruined, accursed.

But this title of the Lord's children implies further that *they have been ransomed*, that they have been rescued from their captivity, and are now in possession of a righteous liberty, in God's sight. A ransom has been paid for their deliverance. They have been rescued from the wrath of a holy God. They have been saved from the eternal punishment due to them for their sins. On British soil, it has been long and deservedly boasted, whoever sets his foot is from that moment free. The ransomed of the Lord have set foot on a holier soil, and are invested with a liberty in Christ, to which multitudes, who contend for civil liberty, are content to remain strangers. They are freed from all condemnation through the blood and death of Jesus. They have liberty to serve Jesus, not with the view of being saved, but as having been saved by His substitutionary death in their place. They are as free from condemnation as Christ Himself, simply because they stand legally united to Him. They can say we are crucified with Christ, nevertheless we live. Our liberty is a privilege equally removed from slavish terror on the one hand, and from bold licentiousness on the other; and as it descends from above, so its tendencies are upward—ever

elevating, ever sanctifying, ever meetening the immortal soul for glory. Our ransom is a ransom from sin, and a restoration to holiness. We are not placed beyond the holy restraints and sweet guidance of God's law, though we are saved by Christ from it's curse. We have been taught to feel obedience sweet, to consider our Father's commandments not grievous but delightful, and to recognize the undivided homage of heart and life which Christ claims, as not more our reasonable than it is our joyful service. What is the ransom which has been paid for us, and who is the person who has paid this ransom? The ransom which gives us salvation is not any price which as sinners we have paid to God. It is not our good deeds, our alms, our repentance, our prayers, our sacrifices, or holy resolutions, as we may describe them. Nothing in our hands we bring but sin in all that we have done, in all that we have thought, in all that we have imagined. Out of Christ God sees us in no other light than as hell-bound sinners. Out of Christ, the decent moralist, the respectable church member, the so called excellent young man and amiable young woman, the generous supporter of the church and missionary cause, are lost and helpless sinners. The word of God judges all to be in the same condemnation. There is no difference. The ransom is nothing less and nothing else than the precious blood of Christ poured out on the cross under a sense of the most exquisite suffering. The ransomer is the adorable Son of God who veiled His glory for a season (though there is no glory greater than that of the cross) and became our kinsman and substitute, that He might be a suitable and satisfactory victim. The only ransom is that which our Lord has paid for us, His own painful death and most precious blood. This ransom He paid to His Father, and by Him it has been accepted in lieu of the eternal sufferings of the sinner. This is the one only, all sufficient and glorious sacrifice for sin. The righteousness of Jesus, consisting in His

holy life, painful sorrows, and atoning death, is the only righteousness which can save sinners. We are emphatically the ransomed *of the Lord.*

This title implies still further that we are personally saved by this ransom—that we have believed, and do believe, in Christ as having paid the ransom for us. No man can include himself among the ransomed of the Lord, who does not believe what the word of God reveals as to the salvation of sinners by the blood of Christ. No man can truly say that he belongs to this class, who has not cast off the rags of his own righteousness, and found peace with God, through the peace-speaking blood of the Lamb. No man can return to Zion with songs, who has not gone as a lost, helpless sinner to Christ, to receive as a free gift salvation and eternal life by His death. Every sinner who, by the all-gracious power of the Holy Spirit, has closed by faith with Jesus Christ as the ransomer who lived and bled and died for him, is one of the glorious number of the ransomed of the Lord. Yes, my Christian friends, we are emphatically the ransomed of the Lord. The Lord from Heaven became the Captain of our Salvation. *He who is the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person, became man, that He might by Himself purge our sins. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.* Wonderful ransom! Unparalleled substitution! For this, the highest being in the universe condescended to occupy the room, and endure the punishment, of the vile, the ungodly, the hell-deserving; so that not only for His sake are we even now entirely delivered from condemnation, and cheered by the prospect of everlasting blessedness with the Lord in glory, but the very residue of suffering which we have to encounter upon earth will be made the minister of our preparation for the more exquisite enjoy-

ment of that bliss. Whether, dearly beloved brethren in Christ, we contemplate the miserable bondage to which, in our unregenerate state, we were subjected, the hopeless slavery into which we had sold ourselves—a thousand times more degrading than any that has disgraced the history of our race—or the preciousness of that ransom which our Lord had to lay down before the charter of our liberty could be made out—a ransom, in comparison with which the price of all worlds would weigh but as a feather—or the grace of the Holy Spirit, the gift of Christ, by whose power we have been enabled to trust in this ransom and divine ransomer; whether we contemplate the glory of our inheritance, which we even now enjoy in large earnest, but which is ours in reversion, in incalculable fulness afterwards, or the love, beyond all description, of that Redeemer, who stooped from His high position, and came under every obligation on our account, and fulfilled them all; I say, whether we contemplate one or all of these things, the emotions of thankfulness and praise excited in our bosoms must be too big for any utterance of our own, and we must employ the language of the Church of Christ of all ages: *To Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

In the second place, we may ask, *Whither* do the ransomed of the Lord return? The answer of our text is, *They shall return, and come to Zion.*

Zion, you are aware, was one of the mountains on which the city of Jerusalem was built. From the days of David, it was ever regarded by the Jews with peculiar feelings of pride and veneration. *Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following. For the Lord hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for His habitation.* What was more natural, then, than that the ancient prophets, depicting the glory of the

universal church or kingdom of the Redeemer as about to be established in the Gospel age, should do so under allusions to this holy and honoured city. Zion is, in their language, the symbol of the Gospel Church, and coming to Zion denotes not only a conversion of the heart to the love of Christ, but a delight in the services and worship of Christ's Church, and in fellowship with Christ's people. Those who have come to Zion belong to a Church whose head is Immanuel, and all whose members are the subjects of His blood-bought and peaceful sway. They have Christ as their Saviour and Master, their brother and friend; they have the Bible, with all its exceeding great and precious promises, as the charter of their freedom; they have the arms of the Almighty ever encircling them in infinite love; they have the staff of the divine Word to lean upon in travelling through the valley of the shadow of death; they have Heaven for their final home, and the being forever with the Lord as their everlasting portion. *Ye are come*, says the Apostle, *unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the spirits of just men made perfect; to God, the judge of all; and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.* Need I enforce it upon you, who are the ransomed of the Lord, that the very fact of returning implies that you leave behind you that bondage to sin under which you lay; that you turn your back upon it; and that you and it have nothing more to do with one another. When the ransomed captive is released, he turns his back at once upon the land of his captivity,—he loathes the sight of the place where he experienced so much misery, and his face is turned at once and forever to the land of his nativity. You have been ransomed by the precious blood of Christ, that your hearts might be filled with the greatest aversion to sin, as well as the greatest love to Christ. We are called upon to crucify the flesh, and spare no enemy of Christ

within our hearts. As no longer of the world,—as delivered from its Egyptian bondage, we are to be openly and unmistakably separated from it in spiritual fellowship. Its joys and pleasures are not to be ours. The joy of the Lord is to be our strength. Too often, in the professing church, we have to lament that the line of demarcation between the disciples of Christ and the world is so faint as to be almost imperceptible. The church and the world are often rocked in the same cradle to spiritual slumber, and the devil finds it easy work to keep them asleep. The world hates to see symptoms of spiritual life, zeal, joy, sweet assurance of salvation in the Church of Christ. It loves an easy formality, a dead mechanical service, as much form, beauty, eloquence, as you please, but it desiderates the least possible amount of earnestness, zeal, and joy in the Lord. Though a living, revived, earnest church is the means which Christ employs to save the world, that very world dislikes nothing so much as such a church, and rejoices in one which is toned gracefully down to an easy indifference about eternal realities. But the Word of our Master is to be our guide. We must come out of the world. We must abandon all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. We must walk in close fellowship with Christ, so that the world's easy religion and gilded sinful pleasures may have no charms for us. The world and its prince, who is the devil, we must resist. No man is a child of God, whatever his profession or fancy may be, who is not returning from the world, from sin and the devil, and coming to Zion. This coming to Zion implies that we hasten onwards,—that every new day should find us a stage further on in our journey; that our manhood should be riper in Christian experience than our youth, and our full age than our manhood; and that, when the sunset of our life comes, the glory that should then surround us should be richer and mellower than at any previous point of our course. The new disciple may imagine that, in discovering the

great truth that the blood of Jesus covers the sin of the believer, he has reached perfection both of knowledge and experience. He may talk unwisely and even boastfully of what he knows. He is forgetting that he is but a babe in Christ, and a beginner in grace. But take the same disciple five years afterwards, and if he has been gaining in grace, he will be found to have grown in humility, simply because he has found out how little he knew of his own weakness, and of the glorious fulness that he is daily discovering in Christ. Take him at later, more advanced stages in his spiritual life, and he has become still more humble in spirit, his foolish boasting has disappeared, his progress in knowledge and grace is more rapid, his fellowship with his brethren is more spiritual, his delight in the ordinances of Christ's house is increasing; in short, he is *returning and coming to Zion* all his life. I need scarcely add, that this deepening humility is perfectly compatible, and ought to be ever associated, with the enjoyment of habitual peace and comfort in Christ; with the sweet assurance that the blood of Christ washes away all our sins; and with the maintenance, from the first moment of our spiritual birth, till we behold the Lamb face to face in glory, of a bold and fearless testimony for the truth, as it is in Christ. Like Paul, we *are not to reckon that we are already perfect, but forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we are to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Let us ask a *third* question. Is it *certain* that the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs? The answer ot our text is,—*They shall return. They shall obtain joy and gladness.* This is not the language of vague conjecture. It is not declared to be exceedingly probable, or probable in the highest degree, that they shall reach the heavenly rest. It is not affirmed that a certain number ot the Lord's ransomed ones shall be finally saved, while others may perish. It is declared

to be absolutely certain that one and all of the ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs. The captain of one of our fine ocean steamers may say that it is highly probable that all who embark in his vessel will reach the other shore in safety. He may point proudly to the past record of his voyages, in which not a single life has been lost. He may point as proudly to the fine, solid, magnificent structure of his noble vessel, which has bravely weathered every storm. He may speak as confidently of the skill, steadiness, and experience of his officers and crew. He may say that the season of the year is auspicious for a safe and speedy voyage. But, he cannot say with certainty that his next voyage will be without harm to any soul on board, for his vessel, with all on board, may in that very voyage sink to the bottom. It is not so with the salvation of the gospel. Our Lord Jesus Christ acting as the substitute of sinners by His Father's appointment, and of His own gracious choice, gave perfect, final satisfaction for the sins of all who should ever believe in His name, when He died upon the cross. The moment a sinner believes in Jesus Christ he is freed from all condemnation. He is perfectly justified by the blood of Christ, which covers all his sin. He is wholly passed beyond the region of condemnation into that of peace with God, and acceptance in Christ Jesus. He is united to Jesus. His whole standing is in Jesus. His safety lies in his being covered by the blood of the Lamb. He is in the hands of both the Father and the Son. *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.*

The hands of Father and Son are locked together, to ensure the believer's safety. The salvation, which is immediately bestowed when we believe in Jesus, is as everlasting as the Saviour's faithfulness and love. While every disciple must be holy, and is saved in order that he may

be holy; it is at the same time absolutely certain that, having by faith received upon his conscience the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, he shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Let us shelter ourselves continually under the blood of the Lamb. Let us be filled with comfort and joy by the sure word of promise,—*the ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs.*

A *fourth* question let us ask. *How* do the ransomed of the Lord come to Zion? The answer is,—*with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.*

Awful were the evils to which they were exposed in their unregenerate condition. They could not then know what was true bliss, what was the peace of God, what was the joy of the Holy Ghost. If they looked forward to eternity, they saw but a dark vista of coming woe; if they looked upward to God, they beheld in their imagination a frowning face, and an arm that grasped the gleaming sword of justice; if they listened to the voice of the inward monitor, they heard but the deep prophetic murmurs of a coming doom. All around and before, and within them, seemed, in their moments of serious reflection, to be full of fearful forebodings, and the very happiness, which they contrived to snatch, in the midst of all this, from outward objects, yielded but an unsatisfactory, an insipid or embittered pleasure; while, if they ever thought at all, in the house of God, or by the grave of an acquaintance, or by the bedside of an afflicted wife or child, their thoughts were thoughts not of pleasantness, but of bitterness; not of hope, but of fear; not of comfort but of despair. Were they ever in this state brought to the brink of the grave? Were they ever made to feel as if about to be immediately summoned into eternity? The shrinking of the whole nature, the recoil of their whole hearts from the dismal prospect, gave evidence that the chains of sin and guilt were still upon their souls.

How different their condition when brought by the Holy Spirit to embrace the Redeemer, when enrolled

among the ransomed of the Lord! Upward, forward, and inward, they can look with unspeakable satisfaction and peace. God is their loving Father, over all whose face there is not a single frown; Christ is their Saviour and Lord; eternity presents a vista of inconceivable bliss; and conscience, though it tells of sins, is hushed to rest, and freed from its burden by the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel! *Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. In whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* Never before did we know any higher happiness than what was the fruit of thoughtlessness; than what resulted from forgetfulness of the flight of time, of the nearness of death, of the dreadful burden of sin, of the curse of a holy God, of the wrath of a rejected Saviour, of the awfulness of an undone eternity. All these had to be obliterated from the mind ere a single drop from the cup of evanescent pleasure could be enjoyed. But now, saved by Christ Jesus, the mind may dwell upon the thought of God, of Christ, of death, and of eternity, while a cup fraught with far richer and purer enjoyment is drunk; while songs of thankfulness flow fervently from the lips, and everlasting joy sits, like a garland, upon the head. Our joy in Christ is everlasting. To be freely forgiven all our sins is the source of wonderful joy. To know that Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us, fills our hearts with joy. To know that in Christ we are accepted, and sit with Him in heavenly places, is fresh cause of joy. To know that He is our Advocate with the Father, and meats all charges against us, and conveys all blessings to us, is sufficient occasion of joy. To cast our griefs and cares, and burdens upon Him, and know that he carries them, and carries us while under them, is reason for joy. To serve Him in any sphere, to speak of His name and love to sinners, to be honoured in winning souls to share in His crown, is cause of joy. To anticipate the hour

when we shall depart and be with Him, or He shall come to us in His glory, is joy enough for our hearts. To be assured that, abiding in Him, His love shall shine undiminished in its glorious fulness upon us through all the periods of eternity, is a cup overflowing with everlasting joy. This is the joy of all believers. Every believer should be assured that these joys are his now, and shall be his for ever. He is guilty of sin when not assured of the love of Christ to his soul. In this state he dishonours the efficacy of Christ's blood to wash away sin, the omnipotence of redeeming grace, the indwelling presence, power, and testimony of the Holy Ghost, while he misrepresents the glorious gospel to others, which is essentially good tidings of great joy to all who receive it. Joy in Christ gives strength, peace, deep personal humility, and glorious victories which have no name among the empty triumphs of the world, but which constitute the elements of Immanuel's glory. Every believer should be an exulting, joyful witness for his Master.

Still, it is not on earth that the full truth of this blessed promise is realized by Christians. They begin to have foretastes here of the blessedness that awaits them, but its fulness is reserved till they see the Lord. Sorrow and sighing are often the portion of their cup. They are sinners till they die; and though they can look to the all-cleansing blood, and are daily dying to sin, yet sin invariably brings trouble. Their struggles with sin are not over when they embrace the Redeemer. Indeed, they only then commence. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but more are their joys. Out of one affliction after another the Lord delivers them on earth, but out of all, not till He summons them to His own immediate presence, where *He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.* Then, indeed, delivered from the last vestige of sin, and made perfect in holiness, the

ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.

In closing this discourse, it is necessary to remind you that no unconverted man has any spiritual understanding of the joy and blessedness of the Lord's children. What would you have thought if a proclamation had been made to the Jews, while still under the Babylonish yoke, announcing that, as a price sufficient to redeem them all had been paid down by a generous benefactor, all who chose to accept this ransom might return to their own country; I say, what would you have thought, if, after such proclamation, any should have been found preferring servitude and exile to unrestricted freedom and the possession of their own land? The case is scarcely conceivable; but it is conceivable, and alas, sad experience confirms the truth of it every day, that, while the offer of ransom is held out in God's Word to poor enslaved sinners, in such terms and with such urgency as the love of Christ alone could have inspired, while the Holy Spirit deals with men by the Word to accept this ransom, while the servants of Christ hold forth His finished redemption, and tell you of the only way to obtain it, even by faith in Jesus, and use every argument and inducement in their power to persuade you to receive it in all its gracious fulness, many are still content and determined to remain in their prison house. And why is this the case? Multitudes are on their way to Hell, and they do not know it. They lie under the curse of a holy God, and they do not believe it. Were the Almighty to cut the brittle thread of life, they would be plunged at once into the fire that is never quenched, and they take no alarm at the thought. They are warned that there is no condemnation so terrific as that which will overtake gospel despisers. but they smile at, and heed not, the warning. They do not know that they are lost, and may, in a few moments, be hopelessly lost, and so they care not for the glad tidings of salvation. They sleep in the devil's lap, and

think they have a good time of it with the toys he lets them have, their money, their lusts, their worldly pleasures, their nominal empty religious services, their unbelieving prayers, their professed empty soundness in the faith, their professed strict adherence to certain forms, their grossly intemperate habits, and a thousand trifles, which, after all, turn out to be trifles. And even if awakened by God's spirit from their condition of spiritual torpor, many turn at once to their tears, to their prayers, to their gifts to the poor and to the church, to their good moral character, for somewhat to pacify their consciences, and appease the anger of God. They struggle to have feeling and to have faith, that so they may come, not as sinners, but as persons who are worthy to be received by God. Dear friends, Christ came to save sinners. He shed His blood as a ransom to redeem lost sinners. The only title in which you can come to Christ, and in which He will accept you, is that of sinners. He came to save those who could do nothing to save themselves. His blood is free to all who will take it. He is now able and willing to save any who will come unto Him. All sins, the greatest, can be washed away in His blood, and the smallest sins cannot be washed away without it. God loves you. Christ loves you. The Holy Spirit bids you come. The moment you come you are saved, you are freely forgiven; the ring is put on your hand, the best robe is thrown over, and perfectly conceals, your nakedness, and the great feast of love is spread for your entertainment. *All things are now ready for you. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.* We solemnly warn you against procrastination, against delay, against all unbelief. The devil bids you wait, and many wait and go down to hell. The devil steps laughingly into too many pulpits and whispers; Wait for God's time, wait for the Holy Ghost, and poor deluded sinners believe his lie and never waken from their deadly sleep till they waken in hell. Jesus bids

you come, come at once, come as you are and He will save you. *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. M. WILLIS, D.D., LL.D.,

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THE MESSIAH'S WORK AND REWARD.

"*He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.* Isah. liii, 11.

THIS book of prophecy has been justly accounted remarkable for the clearness and fulness of its predictions concerning the Messiah. The references in the New Testament to this very chapter, place beyond all doubt the application of the prophecy to Christ: though, if these had been less explicit, the delineations both of Christ's sufferings and of His glory are so minute that we may well wonder, now at least, that with any it should be a question:—Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Only the veil of Jewish prejudice, or the spirit of a wayward criticism, can hide the truth from Jew or Gentile.

It is not in one verse only that Christ is pointed to as

our atoning Priest, and as Himself the victim of sacrifice. The subject fills the chapter: and what a variety of particulars concerning the character and object of His sufferings, and the demeanour of the glorious sufferer, may be gathered from these few verses! Here is touchingly described the humble manner of his advent,—"He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground;" the ungrateful reception given to him by his own, or a world he came to save,—"we hid as it were our faces from him;" then, the intensity of his sufferings, and their variety—from the hand of man—from the hand of God—sufferings of body, sufferings of soul; the evidence of his own will being concerned, as of one consecrating himself, not dragged reluctant to the altar, "led as a sheep to the slaughter"—"pouring out his soul unto death;" the agency of the divine lawgiver in the exaction of the award from the surety,—"It pleased the Lord to bruise him;" the relation of his sufferings to our sins as their cause, and to our reconciliation as their design; withal, the blessed fruit, in the Saviour's exaltation, and the redemption of his people: All these momentous points are here assembled, and in how brief space! The scenes of the Saviour's humiliation, though future, pass before the prophet's eye as if present, and they are described by him in the glowing yet tender language of an interested and affected spectator. Like a fifth evangelist, as Isaiah has sometimes been termed, he might seem as if standing beside the forerunner of Jesus, when he exclaimed, pointing to the word manifested in the flesh, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

The words of our text combine a reference at once to the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. We propose, in dependence on the divine blessing, to speak: I. Of the office which Christ sustains, as here denominated Jehovah's servant: II. Of His suffering work as here described, the "travail of His soul:" III. Of the blessed result as here affirmed: and lastly, of the manner or means

of our participating in that result; "by the knowledge of Him, shall my righteous servant justify many."

I. We invite attention to the denomination here applied to the Messiah, Jehovah's "righteous servant." It may at once be seen that the covenant of redemption is implied. It is only by a voluntary arrangement that He—Jehovah's equal or fellow—was to appear in a subordinate capacity. But though He was a Son, He condescended to be obedient—a servant and sufferer for our sakes. In this capacity we find the eternal Father, in other parts of prophecy as well as here, commending Him to the faith and admiration of men: "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth (Isaiah 42);" and again, "Behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch." It is surely confirmatory of our faith, to hear the eternal lawgiver, ages before the Saviour's advent, thus evincing interest in His great undertaking, and confidence in His sufficiency. He who by a voice from the excellent glory avouched Him His beloved Son, no less owns Him in the humble capacity He had assumed as the messenger of the covenant; for Him hath God the Father sealed.

And so it is not only as servant, but as Jehovah's "righteous servant" He is spoken of. Either His inherent moral excellence is here meant; for such an high priest became us who was holy, harmless, undefiled, "needing not first to offer for Himself:" or, His fulfilment of all righteousness in His capacity of surety may be in view; and it concerns our comfort to hear from the lips of the sovereign lawgiver this testimony to His fidelity— like Moses—to Him who appointed Him,—this assurance that in nothing would He fail to render to the law's precept the required obedience, nor withhold ought of the exacted submission to its penal award. In the New Testament, as in the Old, He is denominated "the just one:" "a faithful as well as merciful high-priest in things pertaining to God," is the qualification affirmed of Him by one

apostle; and another characterises Him "Jesus Christ the righteous"—so the beloved apostle denominates Him, in the act of directing the sin-stricken soul to His propitiation and advocacy.

II. Let us next, then, look at the description, by the prophet, of the Messiah's work. It was no light labour that devolved on Him. They form a very inadequate idea of the cost of redemption, who think only of what was bodily and visible in the Saviour's sufferings. Redemption, our text tells us, was "the travail of his soul." How fitted this to recall His own words: "Now is my soul troubled! and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour!" nor need we limit His soul travail to the hours of His agony, usually so called; for, throughout His entire course on earth, though relieved by intervals of joy in the consciousness of the Father's presence, and the prospect of the reward set before Him, He was the "man of sorrows," familiar with grief; from birth to death fulfilling the work given Him to do, under the weight of the incumbent curse. But, then especially, did He travail as in birth for a world's regeneration, when He bowed His head under the immediate pressure of Jehovah's hand, and drank to its dregs the bitter cup which that very hand had mixed. Who can tell the import of those sorrowful words uttered in His latest hours? Who can fathom the depths of that anguish which no words were adequate to express, and which sought expression in that blood-like sweat, and in the sore crying and tears? No wonder that earth shook, and that the sun, as ashamed, retired from the sight, when the very sun of righteousness went down in blood, and the beloved One of the Father, as one forsaken, was heard to invoke the Father's interposition, and, as it might seem, invoked Him in vain!—yet, not in vain. For "He was heard in that He feared." Even then He saw of the travail of His soul—He saw it and was glad. As the dying conqueror shuts his eyes in peace, and smiles on the wound that is mortal,

when the banners of victory are waving over his head; or as the mother forgets her toils for joy that a man-child is born into the world; so that hour of darkness and of wrath, which closed the eyes of the suffering Saviour, was brightened by the inward satisfaction, the conscious triumph of victory. He exclaimed "It is finished!" and the quaking earth and the rending rocks echoed back the sound!

III. The text declares, accordingly, the result of Christ's sufferings, the success of His undertaking. Nor is it man's salvation alone that was designed. When, in the context, we read of the "pleasure of Jehovah prospering in His hand," a still higher object must be considered, as in the contemplation of God's righteous servant. We learn what was His highest aim, from Christ's own words. Hear His declaration in His prayer to the Father: "I have glorified thee on the earth": and in connection with the words already quoted, uttered in all but His latest hour: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour;" let us mark what He adds: "But for this cause came I unto this hour: Father, glorify thy name." How full of interest the fact that on the very eve of the great crisis,—in the prospect of His final encounter with the powers of darkness, His eye is fixed only on the great end, as if looking past all that was between: "Father, glorify thy name!"

Sin had tarnished the divine glory. The Devil, in seducing man from God, and in turning into a theatre of rebellion and misery a world formed to be the abode of innocence and bliss, might seem to have triumphed, of defeated the Almighty's purpose. Hence it is said, the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. If it be inquired, How? our answer is,—As sin was the occasion of his usurped power, its expiation was the destruction of that power. The hour when sin was condemned in the flesh of the Son of God, was the knell of Satan's thraldom; then was the head of the serpent

bruised; God's rightful dominion re-established: And surely if the Saviour rejoiced in spirit when He beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven, on occasion of the release of individual souls from the grasp of the oppressor; much more did He see of the travail of His soul, and rejoice, when He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly in His cross. So also, if the glory of God was tarnished in the law being set at nought, its honours were retrieved by an obedience divinely perfect, and a sacrifice of priceless value. Here death, too, received its own death, when that which was its sting was by that sacrifice "put away," and the condemning law, whence sin derives its "strength," was magnified.

And so the prospect of the result to man, as well as the glory redounding to God, is represented as constituting largely an element in the Saviour's satisfaction:—"By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." This is set forth as the mediator's reward. It is made certain by the covenant. It is not left a thing of contingency. It is promised to Him—a definite effect of a defined and fulfilled condition; that condition being His bearing His people's iniquities.

In no part of Scripture is the reality of a vicarious atonement and its definite design brought more clearly out. Here are cause and effect—the salvation of a people connected with the bearing of their iniquities by the surety. The words of the sacred writer are alike irreconcilable with the Socinian's theory; and with that which, evading the idea of commutative satisfaction to the justice of God, reduces the atonement to a general moral demonstration of the Divine holiness, united with a display of His willingness to save as many as might seek peace through the reconciliation. The first theory—that of the Socinian—in refusing all idea of satisfaction to justice, only shifts the difficulty it seeks to evade. For how can they vindicate the permission by a holy God of an innocent one being subjected to suffering—and such suffer-

ing!—if the sufferer stood in no relation to the sinner, involving obligation to a violated law? The other theory leaves us almost as perplexed. It supposes a demonstration of God's hatred of sin necessary; but how it could illustrate holiness in the lawgiver, if we exclude the idea of vicarious satisfaction, or the imputation of guilt, it is not easy to see; nor what impression it could make on the universe as to God's rectoral justice, if no acquittal on the one part was to be secured, any more than a transfer of sin to the surety recognised. On this theory of a general demonstration, Christ seems scarcely more identified with sinners of mankind than with sinning angels; and it seems impossible to explain how, if no claim of righteousness required to be satisfied, the effect should be the justification of many. Let it be observed, it is *justification* which is affirmed to be the effect; it is not simply forgiveness. The idea is not the dispensing of arbitrary favour; it is no mere act of clemency; no simple amnesty. Justification is a different thing. It involves the recognition of a claim, not indeed of merit in the justified—for how then could God be said to justify the ungodly?—but of service by the surety. It is on the footing of righteousness such an act proceeds, not on the ground of any compromise, any evasion of the requirements of law. Christ was made under the law. He is the end of the law for righteousness. Its requirements fulfilled, the debt paid, the rightful consequence is represented as following—the debtor is discharged, the condemnation is cancelled; the sinner is more than pardoned, is regarded as standing innocent, or as if just at God's tribunal; is accepted as righteous, as if in his own person he had done all, fulfilled all: the sinless surety not more really having been "made sin" by imputation of guilt than the believing sinner by imputation "made the righteousness of God in Him." And in harmony with this idea, mark how in our text, not only is the justification of many recognised as a rightful consequence of the humiliation of

the surety, but the act of justifying is recognised as His. It is elsewhere, indeed, attributed to the Father. "It is God who justifieth;" yet so, it appears, that all judgment is committed to the Son. The meaning plainly is, Christ is admitted to claim as His by right of purchase, those destined to be His by the Father's grant.

In some sense, each Divine Person is concerned in the justifying as well as sanctifying of the saved. If it is in the name of Jesus, it is also by the Spirit of our God, working in them the faith which apprehends Christ for righteousness. So truly are all things of God (as saith the Apostle), who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

IV. So, finally, we mark in our text the way of our being effectually interested in the work of the Saviour. By His knowledge, or—for it seems to be objectively meant—by knowledge of, or faith in Him, are "the many" justified. Knowledge and faith are in this matter identified. These are, indeed, distinguished from one another sometimes. All knowledge is not faith; yet the latter includes the former. He that seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath eternal life. Such, however, is the freedom of Scripture language—not to be limited by our technicalities—that knowledge again is, in a comprehensive sense of the term, inclusive of faith, and thus is made to express all that is ulterior as well as elementary in fellowship with Christ. The Apostle uses this word to express the highest object of his spiritual ambition:—"That I may know Him in the power of His resurrection, as well as be found in Him." In the occurrence of the word here, it may be taken as synonymous with faith, or standing in the same relation to the justification of the sinner. The thing claiming our chief notice is, that by either or both it is meant to exclude all pretensions of inherent worth in man himself; either word is a word of contrast with all self-justifying claims. And what can so impressively magnify grace and silence boasting as that simply by knowing, or believing in Christ, we pass from condemna-

tion to life? Not by labouring for it, not as presuming on works of righteousness which we have done, but by looking to the glorious object set up before the eye of the mind; by knowing Him, trusting, receiving; only thus are we invested with the right which is in no wise found in ourselves, and admitted to the grace which no deeds of ours are sufficient to earn. This is heaven's "simple plan," not man's circuitous, laborious way, presumptuous withal. For, in exalting his vain endeavours to satisfy the law, he but evinces that he underrates the law. It is not that man owes not works, or that God's law doth not require them; it is that he hath not adequate works to offer, and he is remitted, for all hope of justification, to such a righteousness as is found for him in another. So do we find Old Testament and New harmonizing. Look unto Me and be saved, for I am God. The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoso believeth in Him may not perish. And how expressive are these appeals of the Apostle, designed to commend free and sovereign grace on the one hand, yet by faith to establish the law!—"Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.—The subject suggests valuable instruction as well as to our duty as our privilege. It may be observed that the words of our text bear the form of a promise; saying nothing of man's part, or any activity of his own. It is a characteristic of the method

of grace that the very faith on which his salvation depends is secured by covenant. The promises to Christ by the Father embrace the part required of His people. "To Him shall men come." A people shall be willing in the day of His power. Nevertheless, faith is a duty as well as a grace, a duty of imperative obligation. The promise is designed to stimulate, not to supersede, activity. Man *must* come—*must will.* It is not by violence to his rational nature his obedience of faith is secured; and that knowledge is here put for faith, only manifests the more that God's saving purpose takes effect through the enlightenment of the understanding, and its appreciation at once of the sinner's need, and the Saviour's sufficiency—"with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." If the command to believe is urgent, the danger of unbelief is great. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, is the counsel of inspired wisdom. If we are justified only by faith, yet faith itself must be justified by the works that flow from it. A salvation so based on righteousness, implies that any faith is false that issues not in the establishing of the law in the conscience, and the love of the law in the heart. "Heaven's simple plan"—as opposed to man's devices—does not mean that salvation by grace is "simple" in the sense that there can be no miscarrying, no believing in vain, no need for earnest solicitude. Nay, rather, what cost the travail of his soul to the surety, may well warrant fear and trembling on the part of him who would make sure of appropriating the benefit; yet when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth? Such, it seems, is man's proneness to cling to self-righteous hopes—his aversion to submit to the righteousness of God—that it may be our consolation that faith is here *promised* as to many. The strength of the gospel preacher, in plying the ministry of reconciliation, lies not in any pre-supposed power in man's depraved will, but in this, that Christ SHALL see of the travail of His soul, and shall

not have died in vain. But, he only acts the rational part who gives all diligence to make his calling and election sure; yea, who gives no rest to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, till he knows himself among the justified, and ceases to be of the condemned; till God is glorified, till Christ is satisfied, in his salvation.

Finally, we would urge the great truth implied in our text, as an incentive to your acquiescence in the method of grace: God *is* glorified by it. And as well as the Son, the Father is satisfied. Mercy and truth meet together here. The Lawgiver rests well pleased with the obedience of His righteous servant. He grudges Him not His reward: He remembers His gifts; accepts His sacrifice. Yea, His own love, as well as the Son's, is in the matter, providing the surety, honoring Him, exalting Him; loving Him the more, that He laid down His life for the sheep. All divine persons are harmonized, and all divine perfections. The Spirit and the bride say, Come: and, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. JOHN LAING,

COBOURG.

"*For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.*" HOSEA vi. 6.

OUR Lord quoted part of our text on two occasions, as recorded in Matt. ix. 13, and xii. 7. On the former occasion he was sitting as guest at a feast made by Matthew, the publican. With him at the table sat some who were regarded by the Jews as disreputable characters. At this Pharisees took offence and asked "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" Jesus answered the question to the following effect: I am a physician and go where sin-sick, dying souls may be met, go ye and learn what the Scripture means, where God represents himself as returning to sick and wounded Israel, who was broken under his judgments, not to receive sacrifice or burnt offering, but in mercy to heal and to reveal himself as a Saviour. Even so I am come, not

to receive the sacrifices and offerings and incense of self-righteous Pharisees, but to heal the sick, to reveal God's saving grace to the perishing, to call sinners to repentance. Marvel not, therefore, that I am found where sinners and publicans consort, and not among strict Pharisees who need no physician and feel themselves to be righteous.

On the second occasion, as Jesus was passing through the corn-fields on the Sabbath, the disciples plucked some of the almost ripe ears, rubbed out the corn, and ate thereof. With this Pharisees found fault: "Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day"—it is a desecration of holy time. Our Lord replied: you are mistaken; remember the case of David, how holy bread was given to him and his followers, and there was no desecration; reflect how in the Temple the priests *work* on the Sabbath, but there is no desecration. Had ye known what this meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless;" for "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." These men are hungry in the service of David's Lord, a service greater than that of priests in the temple; therefore there is no desecration in their working or their eating, "for the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath day."

Here our Lord lays down a great principle by which God's dealings with man are characterised, viz., *The glory of God and the good of man are more important than outward ceremonials.*

Man is God's creature and subject; God is his Creator and King. Man is dependent on God and responsible to Him; he is sinful and deserves punishment; he is unable to save himself, and so is lost, unless God interpose to save him. God is holy, yet merciful, "A just God and a Saviour." A knowledge of these mutual relations and of God's character is the only basis of true religion, and the discharge of the duties which arise from these relations is practical godliness.

This knowledge of God has been lost, and man is ignorant alike of God's character and his own duty. To remove this ignorance, and to reveal himself in the great design of God's dealings with man; to afford such a display of God's perfections as may rouse men from their apathy and fill them with light, so that they may receive his grace, and be renewed in heart and life.

There is a very mistaken notion of religion common, alas! even among nominal Christians—"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Men think God is like themselves. Influenced by self-interest; swayed by passion; soothed by flattery; won over by gifts; gratified by revenge. Hence the monstrous abominations of false worship: the African dragging his idol in the mud and maltreating it; the priests of Baal frantically leaping and cutting themselves with knives till the blood gushes forth; the Druid with his holocaust in wicker-work; the Mohammedan's weary pilgrimage to Mecca's tomb; the Hindoo's costly offering at the idol shrine; the hermit lacerating his wasted body; aye, the Christian's formal times of prayer and fasting, gifts and contributions; even the staunch Protestant's sudden religiousness when the pestilence is wasting around him. Wherefore all this? we ask. Wherefore! is the reply of each and all. Surely God will see my sorrow, be satisfied with my pains; he will accept my gifts and be moved by my groanings; surely these things will please God—he will relent and become propitious; surely our religious words and deeds avail on our behalf! Against this idea, so dear to ignorant, proud man, our text lifts its indignant protest. God asks not sacrifice; he would rather bestow mercy; God comes not to receive burnt-offering, but to give you the knowledge of himself. Oh beware of fancying that by anything you do you can add to God's blessedness or change his purpose. The theme, then, which shall particularly engage our attention is, *The ordinances of worship which God has appointed and his dealings in providence are*

intended to benefit us, particularly by imparting to us the knowledge of God.

I. *The ordinances of worship are intended to benefit us: not to increase God's blessedness.*

Eliphaz tells us this: "Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?" Now there are positive ordinances of worship which cannot be neglected without guilt; let us see how they are calculated to benefit man.

1. Our text speaks of *sacrifice;* or an offering of atonement. We select the highest form of it under the Mosaic ritual. It is the tenth day of the seventh month, and all Israel is assembled at the tabernacle before the Lord. The High Priest has laid aside his gorgeous robes of beauty and ornament, and stands at the altar attired in spotless white. Beside him, tied with cords to the altar, are a bullock, two rams, and two goats; the bullock is brought forward and slain, an atonement for the High Priest. Bearing in one hand some of the bullock's blood in a basin, and in the other a censer of coals, from which goes up a cloud of fragrant smoke to hide the mercy-seat, he passes through the holy place, lifts the awful veil that conceals the Presence, and, in silent, mysterious loneliness, stands before the dread Shechinah, the glory of Jehovah! He sprinkles of the blood upon the mercy-seat eastward, and again seven times before the mercy-seat, and retires with humble reverence. One of the goats is now brought forward and slain, and his blood as the bullock's is taken within the veil, the other goat is presented, the High Priest lays both hands on his head and confesses all the iniquities of the children of Israel, putting them on the head of the goat, and sends him away to be let go in the wilderness. Now the High Priest washes himself, puts off the linen stained with blood of sin, and appears arrayed in his priestly robes of costly beauty. The rite concludes with

the ram's being slain and offered as a thank offering; the fat of the sin-offering is burnt upon the altar; and, as the smoke of atonement ascends, Israel feasts before the Lord, ratifying his covenant over the sacrifice.

But what of the sin-offerings? There they lie; the carcases of bullock and goat, mangled and gory, with the entrails torn out, begrimmed with ashes and dirt, noisome and disgusting. Carry them forth, away out of the camp, as unclean and hateful, there let them be burnt till nought but ashes remains.

Now, what means all this? Is God profited thereby? What delight can He have in the gasps of the dying victim? Can the quivering flesh, or clotted gore, or blood-stains in the Holy place, or the unclean, noisome mass, as it consumes away, be pleasing to Him? We shrink from such a scene, to us the shambles seem cruel, and instinctively we avoid the slaughter-house. Can God delight, then, in such things? Does it afford him happiness? Does he profit thereby? God forbid. He will have mercy and not sacrifice.

Why, then, was sacrifice appointed? For our sakes, to teach us the mercy of God, and show us the way of salvation. Reflect on it; look at that offensive mass of bloody carcase, dust, ashes, dung; offensive, noisome, cast out, unclean; slowly consuming in the undying fire. Such is sin; loathsome, hateful, ruinous, cast forth, accursed, destroyed in the burning wrath of a holy God. Was it possible for a right-minded Jew to witness such a ceremony without profit? How humbled and terror-stricken as he looked on the destroyed victim! How overwhelmed with shame and fear! And, as he returned to feast before the Lord, how must his heart have been filled with thankful joy to know that God can forgive; that sin can be lifted from the sinner and laid upon another; that blood can expiate; that the guilty may draw nigh and God will receive him! Surely, for the benefit of the worshipper, sacrifice was established by God.

Let us look beyond the symbol, and, in New Testament light, apprehend the great reality, "The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Now is the real day of Atonement. Our High Priest has laid aside for a time His glory, and stands clad in the spotless habit of a sinless human nature. He offers himself; His human nature the sacrifice. He passes through these heavens into the very presence of God to intercede in our behalf; He takes His own blood before the throne, and, like sweet incense, His merits arise with acceptance. He is made a curse, taken out of the holy city and hanged on the accursed tree; there, with our sins laid on Him, He bears the wrath of God and is consumed beneath it. "It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him." Why? Because He found delight in his agony? Had the Father pleasure in the anguish of His Son's soul, that He hid his face from Him, and left Him to God-forsakeness? Did He rejoice in the Shepherd's blood that he bade the sword awake and smite Him? Oh no; for us He died that we might be blessed. By His death our guilt was expiated and our pardon was secured. From His wounds distilled the balm of healing for sin-sick souls; the loud cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani" brought to us words of joy and peace ineffable. In mercy and in love God made the sacrifice, and by it we are benefited.

2. Again our text speaks of burnt-offering. The temple is finished and Solomon has called Israel together to keep high holy-day before the Lord. God's glory has filled the temple courts and the Covenant people rejoice; but how is this joy to find expression? Look; what mean those herds of lowing cattle which feed around the city—twenty-two thousand oxen? What mean those far-spread flocks of bleating sheep, one hundred and twenty thousand in number? These are for burnt-offerings, thank offerings to the Lord—not enjoined, but a free-will offering, costly and precious. For two whole weeks, two columns of dense smoke ascend heavenward from the brazen altar in the middle of the Court, as the fat of the unfailing oxen and

sheep is consumed; for two whole weeks, Israel feasts on the offering. It is Jerusalem's festal day—a day of joy and gladness; and these mirthful feastings give expression to gratitude and joy.

And God accepts them; but why? Do countless herds and flocks enrich Jehovah? Has he any part in the revelry and mirth? Hear his own answer—"I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds; for every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows to the Most High."

Why, then, are such ordinances appointed? For our sakes. Though full-fed oxen and fat sheep; the finest wheat, the richest fruits, and choicest wines, afford God no pleasure; yet is it good for men to feast before the Lord. What a privilege to feel *Jehovah Shammah,* that the Lord is with us; to seal the covenant; and, with full heart, to offer up all to God. Happy thus to give expression to grateful feelings; thus day after day to have them prolonged and multiplied; and to rise, midst scenes of holy mirth, upward on wings of faith and love to fellowship with Israel's God.

Here again we may rise beyond the type, as we accept the sacrifice and feast before the Lord An outward ordinance of eating and drinking before the Lord still remains to us, and as with holy joy we partake, we rise into conscious acceptance of the Saviour and conscious interest in His blood and merits. How natural, then, our thank-offering! Not our own, we offer our bodies as living sacrifices; we bring our gifts; we offer our sacrifices of righteousness, and God accepts them, while we obtain the blessing. Our well spent Sabbaths, our religious duties, our labours for Christ's cause, our gifts and

contributions, do not of a truth make God more blessed, they do not enrich Him, or add one ray to His glory ; yet are they acceptable to Him, while in the enjoyment of these privileges we are unspeakably benefited.

Thus can we see that ordinances of worship are intended to benefit us by bringing us into fellowship with God.

II. *The grievous and painful dispensations of God's providence are intended to benefit us and not to gratify God.*

Men suffer and their sufferings are known to God, God could prevent them Why, then, are they permitted? The Pharisee, with disfigured face, squalid and hungry; Simon standing on his pillar sixty feet high, year after year ; the hermit feeding on roots dug up in the desert ; the recluse pining amid filth and darkness ; the ascetic afflicting his body with cruel pains, are sufferers. Self-inflicted are their sufferings. Others suffer not of choice. Cruel are their pains, crushing their weary burden, with them groaning, sad their hearts. Now ask these sufferers what of these things? and they reply,—"Can you doubt? Is not God satisfied with these bitter pains? Are they not meritorious in His eyes? Are not my pains sent for my sins? and will not present suffering avail to save from punishment hereafter? Can we doubt? Yea, verily, we deny such reasoning altogether. Away with such nonsense alike revolting to reason, inconsistent with love, and dishonouring to goodness. "As I live," saith the Lord, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth," and we may add, in the pains of him that suffereth.

Reflect on the history of Israel, as suggested by the context. It was a sad sight to see God's chosen people whom He had brought out of bondage, nursed and carried as on eagle's wings in the wilderness, and planted in the goodly land ; to see them captive in Babylon, sitting disconsolate with their silent harps hanging on the willows. It was sad to see that city which had been the joy of the whole earth, God's chosen abode, the place of glad resort, a blackened desolation, the young men lying slain at the

gates, the grey heads dishonoured, the virgins ravished in the streets, and the little ones dashed against the stones. It was a sad sight to see the beautiful house where God had dwelt with Ichabod written over its smouldering ruins, polluted and abhorred of the Lord. Well might the prophet weep at the desolations and represent the daughter of Zion as sitting solitary and raising to heaven her piteous wail—"Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger."

Sad though these things were, God had brought them to pass. But did he delight therein? Were these ruins and desolations and harrowing horrors and deaths pleasing to him? God forbid.

It was a grievous thing when the prophet went forth to utter his burden of judgment. Even the stern stout heart of Elijah must have quailed as he swept down from Gilead to put Ahab under ban, or fled disheartened and trembling to the desert to escape the rage of the murderess. Micaiah, fed with bread and water and languishing in the dungeon, must have felt well nigh overwhelmed, because he had borne God's message of woe. Ahab and Jezebel, their dissolute courtiers, and idolatrous companions must have raged and gnashed their teeth against these men of God when their word cut them to the heart. Yet these sufferings and that rage were the result of God's dealings. Had He pleasure, then, in the sorrows of His servants or delight in the impious rage of His enemies? Away with the thought—"He was afflicted in the afflictions of the faithful, and was grieved at the impenitence and hardness of heart of the rebellious.

That Babylonian storm that broke over Judea and left it a desolation was the thunder clap, dark and terrific, that shook the earth, shivered the cedars, swept down in torrents and left a wreck strewn on every hand. But by it a seed was saved from corruption to be planted in

Babylon and afterwards to be the seed of blessing. These burdens of judgment were the sharp blows of God's hammer, wherewith he was hewing the people, blows to break the hard heart, and fires to melt the stony heart. In mercy and in love God dealt with His people.

Nor is it otherwise now. God deals with us in his providence and sends us his messages alike of mercy and of judgment. And why is this? Ye who are searched by the word, whom the sharp two-edged sword pierces, cut with conviction, stung with remorse, smarting under the lash of a guilty conscience, and who have no rest, but are angry with God's message and His messenger; ye, who languish on beds of pain, or have risen from them to find life henceforth a burden, a scene of hopeless suffering; ye who sit astounded amid the ruins of a lost fortune and scarcely dare to hope for returning prosperity; ye who have laid your loved ones in the silent grave and have returned to your widowed home to find it for ever shaded by deepest gloom; ye who have suffered from the vile tongue of calumny and mourn over your good name hopelessly defamed; ye sufferers, God knows it all. God permits all. But beware of wrong thoughts of God, hard thoughts. Not because He has delight in your sorrow or pleasure in your pain, has He afflicted you; but in love and in mercy, because He would benefit and teach you. He desired mercy and not sacrifice.

What if the God of mercy comes shrouded in darkness; what if in making Himself known, He comes clothed in terrors, sends forth His gleaming arrows and speaks in a voice of awful majesty; is He therefore less near or less merciful? Even darkness and terrors are beneficial, as they prepare the soul for meeting with God and render it susceptible. When Israel's dark night of captivity was past, the morning broke forth, God raised His people up and they revived in his sight; the mists of sin which hid his face were scattered, and the sun of righteousness arose with healing under his wings; when judgments were

exhausted, mercies came gently down as the former, and latter rain on the earth. Even so let sufferers believe and wait on God; His is a purpose of mercy while He afflicts. The pangs of conviction, the shame of guilty fear, the burdening sense of sin are needed to lead you—to drive you—to Jesus for relief; the bleeding wound from God's sharp pruning knife, the sickening sorrow under which your heart faints, the fretting sore which no human balm can heal, are all intended to send you to the Great Physician who waits to bless you; the cruel cross you have daily to carry, the taunt and scornful reproach which attend a godly life, are meant to keep you walking near to Jesus, and to force you from the world's false friendship. Only in mercy does He afflict; because He loves, he chastens. Deep into the fallow ground God's ploughshare goes; but as it cuts and tears up the stubborn soil, which long was overgrown with thorns and weeds nigh unto cursing, it is changed into a garden of the Lord wherein grow the abundant fruits of righteousness to the glory of His grace. Never, not even on Sinai's tempestuous top was God revealed in majesty so awful, so severe, as when he drew near to his well Beloved Son on Calvary. Then he called for sacrifice, and justice demanded blood. But more than sacrifice he desired mercy; and sacrifice in order to mercy. That black night of God-forsakeness broke forth into a morning of joy, brightest light followed the darkness, and from that quintessence of agony, horror and shame, came forth blessedness, peace and glory. Then on Golgotha God came in His holiness and grace to judge sin and prepare mercy, and thence flow forth streams of blessing to mankind.

III. Our text, while revealing a purpose of mercy in general, tells us *in particular that God in his ordinances and in his providential dealings seeks to give us the knowledge of himself.*

1. He makes known his true character and removes

our ignorance. Ordinances of worship and providences alike reveal God. God *is;* and he is near to us; accessible, we may hold communion with Him. If it were not so, worship would be vain. He hears prayer and praises; he accepts the sacrifice and gift; he is among men; He their God, and they his people. Daily mercies, like the manna and the flowing rock in the desert, remind us of His presence. Trials and judgments, with vouchsafed strength and deliverances, make us *feel* him near. No mere intellectual abstraction is our God; no passionless principle or cold fate with iron heartlessness. But a personal being, who wills, and loves, and feels for us, to whom we speak and he answers us; a Father, whose bowels yearn over us and who pities us with compassion that passes knowledge.

This God of love is holy also. Just when a Saviour; of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. This the dying victim proclaims, "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness"; the impure must be cleansed; "without holiness no man shall see God." This his chastenings and rebukes declare, as he visits iniquity and will not let the guilty pass unpunished. This the Cross proclaims; and every ordinance that reminds us of our Saviour's obedience, sufferings and death, God is just while he justifies the ungodly.

This holy God is jealous, too. The whole heart's love he demands; he will have no rival. The covenant engagements of worship declare this; the ever-recurring sacrifice; the never-ending labour for Christ; the oft-renewed gift and free-will offering. Day by day we come to know it; not our own, but redeemed, God claims us altogether for His; not our will, but His to be done. Blessed, thrice blessed they who thus learn the true character of God and his perfections.

2. God gives us an experimental knowledge of Himself. A man passes by and you ask your neighbour who he is; he knows the name, where he dwells, what he does, and

the character he bears; but he adds, "I am not acquainted with the man; I have never spoken to him." So is it possible to know God's name, His glorious character, His mighty works, His exalted place of habitation, and still not know Him savingly. This last is what God desires—"the knowledge of God more than burnt-offering"; "to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent," for this is life eternal; to know God as a friend and to enjoy Him.

What are ordinances? Means of grace in which God sets Himself forth in Jesus for our acceptance and communion; trysts, appointed places where God and man may meet and hold intercourse as friends; feasts, where over the sacrifice God may shed down the blessing and man sup with Him in love. What are providences? That full cup, which with joyous hand we hold and quaff with thankfulness: what is it but a charm to draw the soul up to Him that has made it overflow? The cup of wormwood and gall of which, as we taste, we shudder and cry out to God who has mingled it for us; our blasted hopes, marred idols, broken cisterns, withered gourds: what are they? All of them God's appointed instruments to bring us to Himself. In them He calls us to turn from earth's vain joys and delusive hopes and fix our hope on heaven; to leave the idol He has broken and take Himself as our portion; to forsake the cracked cisterns which can hold no water and repair to the ever-flowing stream that comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb; to abandon earth's shadows which fail when the scorching heat beats on them, and to seek repose and refreshing under the shadow of the Rock of Ages. Thus drawn, thus driven to God, we come to know Him and to be blessed in Him. All here is mercy, all is love—not in selfishness, not for his benefit, advantage or gain, but for our benefit does God deal with us; "He desires the knowledge of God more than burnt-offering."

What, then, shall we say to these things? What is the

practical conclusion? What return shall we make for God's mercy towards us and the sweet revelation of Himself made to our souls?

> "What shall I render to the Lord
> For all his gifts to me?"

Mark well what we have said. You do not confer any favour on God by becoming religious; on the contrary, you receive favour from Him. You do not put God under any obligation by your services or your sufferings, but you come under obligation to Him. The King's Son has come among us sinners and eats with us; we have a noble guest. No honour done to Him by sitting at the publican's table, but what an honour for those who sit with Him there and enjoy his society! I ask not, then, what should God give me for being religious? but, what shall I give back to God as a return for the knowledge of Himself and of His Son? What shall I lovingly render to Him for His love and mercy unto eternal life? Here is the motive which impels the Christian, the mainspring of Christian living; "The love of Christ constraineth us; we love Him who first loved us." I am not my own but bought with a price; therefore will I glorify God in my body and spirit, which are the Lord's. No wonder that, under this mighty influence, the woman that was a sinner wept at Jesus' feet and lavished on him the costly spikenard—all was too little; no wonder that Saul of Tarsus counted all but loss for this knowledge; and, burning with apostolic zeal, faced dangers, overcame difficulties, and triumphed in the end.

Ah, if ye knew what this Scripture meaneth, ye would act as these acted; if ye knew God, ye would not forget nor grieve him; if freely ye have received, freely would ye give; if ye knew His love, ye would not put off repentance to a future day; if ye apprehended His grace ye would not stand away, saying: "I am not good enough; if ye understood the freeness of salvation, ye would not

insult God by offering your worthless prayers and beggarly deeds as a price for his salvation. If ye knew, believed and apprehended God as He is revealed to you in the gospel of His grace, ye would close with His offer, embrace His salvation, follow Him in His work and His sufferings, and glory in the cross of Christ. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ, by which I am crucified unto the world and the world unto me."

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

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MATT. xii., 21. "*And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.*"—43–45. "*When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also to this wicked generation.*"

THE Evangelist had referred to a prophet's portrait of the Messiah,—"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my Beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. . . . And

in His name shall the Gentiles trust." He intimated also that the prophetic representation was realized in Jesus of Nazareth.

And then he leaves us to cherish the hope that yet, in God's time, the Gentiles—the nations of the earth—shall trust in the Saviour's name, and glory in the "Servant" of Jehovah.

The second and larger section of the text is an illustration and a simile which Christ employed to point the truth of admonitory warning he had given to captious adversaries. They wanted a sign in proof of His claim to be the Prophet sent by God—some extraordinary incontrovertible manifestation, as if what they saw and heard was of no account. This demand Christ refused. They should see Him, should hear His message, as the inhabitants of Nineveh had seen and heard the prophet Jonah, and take the responsibility of receiving or rejecting His words.

Our Lord then supposes the case of an "unclean spirit" expelled from the man it had possessed, and wandering desolate, without a home, without an instrument whereby to do its demon work, and preying upon itself. The wretched spirit seeks to re-occupy its old abode, and finally enters it again with seven spirits more wicked than itself; and the man, the hapless victim of these unholy guests and tyrants, but lately delivered from the satanic oppression, is plunged into a worse condition than before.

"Even so," said the Saviour, "shall it be also unto this wicked generation." That is, Israel, whose representative men he was addressing, was a "rebellious house," "a gainsaying and disobedient people." As were the fathers, so were the children. In the earlier times idolatry, with its accompanying pollutions and debasement, had been always in the forefront of their sins. That brought its penalty in the overthrow and captivity of the guilty people. The all but exterminating judgment exorcised the

demon of idol worship; and the exiles who returned and re-built Zion, never doubted again whether Baal or Jehovah were the true God. Nor did their descendants ever after think of the cruel rites of Moloch, or the impure orgies of the Queen of Heaven, but with abhorrence. The house of their soul was emptied and swept of these abominations, and garnished or furnished for other inmates. They became very zealots for the law of Moses, for God and his ordinances as they conceived of them.

But human wickedness is not confined to one unchanging form of expression, and is quite tolerant of modifications that may entirely change its external aspects. Satan can dwell in variously furnished houses; and, newly equipped, can re-enter the spirit of a man, or a system, from which, in another character, he had been expelled.

Such was the state of the great body of the Jewish people in the Saviour's day. Boasting of God and the fathers, of the traditions and promises, and devotees of the law to puerility, they were in heart, they were even intellectually as far from God, as incapable of knowing Him, as when Jephthah immolated his daughter, as when the smoke and the lurid fires in the vale of Hinnom told of the sacrifices which a ferocious superstition was offering there. And, proving this their ignorance of God, in enmity to God's last, best and brightest revelation of Himself, they hated and crucified the Lord of Glory; and so filled up the measure of their iniquity.

Their last state was worse than the first. Just as yet a recklessly wicked and daring villain may be arrested and stunned by the shock of a calamity that prostrates him, in which he is compelled to see retribution, and inevitable destruction if he takes another step. He recedes in terror. He changes his course. For a while the defiant spirit is cowed. But he forgets in time God's mighty work and his own alarm. And he can be seen at length pursuing a career after the bent of his own bad heart, never stained with the old brutalities, differing in all

seeming and circumstance from the former manner of life, but as "earthly, sensual, devilish," as fatal to himself in the end, and more dangerous for others. "The last state of that man is worse than the first."

Our text is replete with salutary lessons for us in these last days.

1. The "Christ of God" has come. The "Desire of all nations;" God's "Servant;" "Beloved;" "in the power of the Spirit." God's "Salvation to the ends of the earth." In His name the Gentiles trust.

The gospel of this grace, glad tidings for all people, has been preached far and near. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

Christianity is now the religion of all enlightened and civilized nations. Christian truth in sacred scripture and in monuments of various kinds is their heritage. And Christ's is the name they invoke and praise as Saviour and Lord.

These nations are of comparatively recent origin. We have their history quite reliable in the main. And in that history we can trace their march from rude and small beginnings to the really imposing attitude and altitude they occupy at this day.

The demon which, as the spirit of pagan ignorance and barbarism, dominated their ancestors in the infancy of the races has been expelled. Their house is emptied and swept of superstition and savagery in their ancient forms.

Woden and Thor have been dethroned and forgotten. The smoke of horrid Druidical sacrifice rises no more above the dark forest. The galleys of ruthless Vikings issue no longer from the fog-covered fiords to revel in plunder and slaughter. Serf oppression —the death feud —the blood revenge—the wild foray, and the wilder wassail when the bloody work was done—all that belongs to the past; and but for fragments of musty chronicles and

sagas, which some doting antiquary brings to the light, and in which a Tennyson will find a theme for romantic song, would be entombed in the past unknown to living men.

The Gentiles now trust in the name of Christ.

2. To this extent the nations trust:—

They have been "turned from dumb idols to serve the living God." They have been educated in the revolving years—led out of that intellectual and moral state in which idolatries with their accompanying debasements and horrors are possible. They have been trained and led onward in the ever-growing knowledge of all things. And Christ for them is at the head of that progressive career begun when first they heard of the crucified Lord. Christian truth is the basis and strength of all that is valuable in that progress; and Christian truth does so ramify and penetrate our whole modern civilization, our whole mental culture, moral life and being, that the nations could not formally dethrone Christ, could not go back to the religious, social, political condition of barbarism, any more than they could cast away their "arms of precision," and go back to the bow and arrow, the spear and the war-club of their forefathers.

The demon in his old character cannot re-enter the house. The house is emptied and swept of all that made it a suitable abode for demons in such forms.

But demons do not die, nor change their nature when they are forced to change their form. After a revolution that has hurled them from their ancient throne, demons can return again in other guise, and with increase of demon-purpose and resource, can reinstate themselves in the seat of power from which they had been driven. When Stonehenge is deserted and dismantled, demons can enter Christian temples, and sit in the place of God, and mask their evil lore in a Christian creed. When the night of heathen darkness has passed, demons can accommodate themselves to the dawn and to the day.

When coarse ferocities have yielded to the softening influences of Christian civilization, and when peaceful industries, and commerce and learning have supplanted the rough usages and the sodden ignorance of the "dark ages," demons then can utilize civilization, and call into their service knowledge, art, ingenuity and skill. It was their work, when gross darkness covered the earth, to instigate simple savages to bite and tear and club one another. It is their work in an enlightened age, to invent chassepot, and needle gun, and mitrailleuse—to construct the mighty war ship and the terrible artillery.

Demons can sit at the council-board with kings and their ministers, planning crafty schemes of conquest and repression, suggesting diplomatic chicanery and treachery, concocting specious appeals to popular passions, and to the best and worst principles in a nation's soul. And thus it comes to pass that, under such inspiration and direction, a people civilized and christianized, may be worse in their aptitude and power for wickedness, for national crime, than were the same people or their ancestors in the old pagan times.

The last state can be worse than the first.

3. Dropping the metaphor now,—this is the truth it represents:—human wickedness can survive the shock it receives in repeated conflicts with truth, and light, and goodness. It has lived and been rampant when prophets were pleading with infatuated transgressors, and when the judgments of God were scorching them. It has outlived the revelation of grace and truth by Jesus Christ, the story of His love, the sight of His uplifted cross, and the reformation after reformation which the mercy of God in Christ has produced. It can withstand assaults upon its principles till the might of truth has fairly overwhelmed it, and then it will slip from the untenable position only to take another where it may continue to battle for the false and the wrong. It can cast from it antiquated errors, once they are exploded, like old garments, and in

the possession of the victorious truth, as in a new dress, be the same old wickedness. And still, in our day, as in the world before the flood, God sees, and we see, that "the wickedness of man is great upon the earth."

Men and nations can receive and adopt a revelation from heaven, and with that in their hands, can erect altars to the living God. They can name the name of Christ, and exalt it as the only name whereby we can be saved. They can call themselves by that name, Christians, and honour the Lord by the avowal of Christian faith, and the practice of Christian worship. That faith and worship will produce marvellous change when first received, when made the public religion, and will continue to affect the whole individual and national life intellectually, morally, and spiritually, giving it complexion, manner, principles, and laws. But—

If Christ Himself, a loving, holy Son of God, Saviour and Brother of men, is kept out of the heart—if His salvation from sin, and His commandments for guidance, are kept out of the life we live—if actions are withdrawn from His scrutiny, and conscience held estranged from His law—and men and nations can so treat Christ,—then, that state, illumined and modified by Christianity, can be worse morally, because the Light and Truth have come, and with them the enlargement of human insight and faculty,—that state, which is Christless at the core, can be more demonish in the midst of its science and refinements than was the state of the rude pagan progenitors of the ungodly man or people.

4. Reflections like these must have occurred to many when listening, for some time back, to every day's report of wrong and outrage, and thinking on the startling events that are taking place.

Eighteen centuries have come and gone since a heavenly Saviour trod the soil of Palestine, and closed a life of infinite compassion and worth upon the accursed tree.

Eighteen centuries have gone by since that sacrifice

was explained to men, as Divine Love in Divine Pity living and dying "to save sinners," "to bring them to God."

Eighteen centuries have passed since He, the Lord of Glory, claimed the right to call us brethren, told us to call God "Our Father," and said, "Love one another as I have loved you,"—and said again, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another,"—and said again, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

During all these centuries the Great Sacrifice, with its thrilling appeal to human love and veneration, has been kept before the minds of men. We do not wonder that, in the early ages, the warlike races just emerging from their ancestral superstitions, and beginning to learn of Christ, should often forget His precepts, and misread the lesson of His Cross. But now, in these last days, as if all the Christian teaching and training, and progress and elevation, went for nothing, again we hear the tramp of armies, the roar of death-dealing cannon, and the shouts and groans of far-extending battle. And sickening carnage, and destruction, and desolation, and woe have marked the march and the encounters of the contending hosts.

We are not to review the war and its causes. The reason assigned for engaging in it by the aggressor was not worthy of a moment's consideration. The real cause is, "The wicked bear rule, and the people mourn." The ambitious, unprincipled, crafty, are in the seat of power. One people and party in the strife, though they pipe in a different strain now that the strife is ended, shouted in frenzied ardour, by their usual mouth-pieces, for the on-

slaught, and the humiliation of neighbours whom they chose to regard as foes. France was indignant that Prussia should have grown so great. Prussia would not denude herself of greatness to soothe the wounded susceptibilities of France. French vanity and insolence were met by German pride and patriotism. And a conflict unparalleled in its character and consequences has been the result.

The mass of men are ignorant yet alike of their true interests and of their strength. They are falsely trained in regard to a nation's prosperity and honour. They are falsely trained in regard to their obligations to respect the rights and happiness of other nations as they would their own. They have not been taught the brotherhood of men in Christ. They have been taught that armies and fleets, and victories and conquest are glorious. And now they are learning to their cost what price must be paid for these poraps by all who admire them, sooner or later.

There lay in both the hostile countries materials long prepared for conflagration, ready to burst out in flame as soon as incendiary would apply the match. The incendiary appeared in the callous, impenetrable ruler who rose to his bad eminence by perfidy and massacre, and whose personal or dynastic exigences were supposed to require the perpetration of the greatest crime in modern history. He declared war. The fiendish work began. And God's name was mentioned by him, and God's aid was invoked on his behalf for the success of his enterprize! Demons, to give them their due, are not so profane!

War in Christian Europe! War as cruel and as causeless as any conflict that was ever forced on reluctant people; though God may have had His reasons for unsheathing the sword of judgment; and though God, in His mercy, may bring lasting good out of this outbreak of the wrath of man. None of us realize sufficiently how entirely and irreconcilably war is opposed to the whole

principle and spirit of Christianity, nor what an utter evil it is to a people even when they are compelled to engage in it for the defence of all that is dear to them. Its repulsive features are softened in the old story we love to read of heroic valour in the days of yore, when the tide of proud invasion was driven back, or when the haughty oppressor was smitten to the ground, and the country saved by right-hearted men.

"War is the fruitful parent of crimes. It reverses all the rules of morality. It is nothing less than the temporary repeal of the principles of virtue: a system out of which almost all the virtues are excluded, and in which nearly all the vices are included."—

ROBERT HALL.

"Who has ever told the evils, curses and crimes of war? Who can describe the horrors of the carnage of battle? Who can portray the fiendish passions which rage there? Who can tell the amount of the treasures wasted, and of the blood that has flowed, and of the tears that have been shed over the slain? If there is anything in which earth, more than in any other, resembles hell, it is in its wars."—ALBERT BARNES.

A correspondent of the press, writing from the battle-field at Forbach, after the rout of the French army, and referring chiefly to the ruin and terror and anguish of the villagers and country people, said, "If all the world could only catch a glimpse of such scenes as I have looked upon, I will venture to say that war would become impossible: that fierce national pride, and Quixotic notions of honour, and hot ambitions of kings, and emperors, and statesmen, would be for ever curbed by the remembrance of all the pity and the desolation of the spectacle."

"Fight! Fight! Fight!
Should the cause be foul or fair;
Though all that is gained is an empty name,
And a tax too great to bear:
An empty name and a paltry fame,
And thousands lying dead;
While every glorious victory
Must raise the price of bread.

War! War! War!
Musket, and powder, and ball;
Ah! what do we fight so for?
And why have we battles at all?
'Oh! justice must be done,' they say,
'The nation's honour to keep;'
Alas! that justice should be so dear,
And human life so cheap!

It is sad that a Christian land,
A professedly Christian state,
Should thus despise the high command,
So useful and so great,
Delivered by Christ Himself on earth,
Our constant guide to be;
To 'Love our neighbour as ourselves,'
And 'Bless our enemy.'"

ANON.

Nevertheless, write, and plead, and preach in what strains you please, here is the terrible Brutalizer and Destroyer still. The Fury with her flaming torch and gory brand! The Antichrist! and crowned by Christian nations! O Lord, how long?

5. What is the cause of such a state of things? How can enlightened nations be so insensate as to permit bad rulers or good to mass great armaments, and embroil them in wars with other people? How is it that the popular voice is frequently the most vociferous for the strife and the most impatient of delay?

Recent events have shattered the enamel of Parisian civilization, and allowed the world to see what a craven, caitiff soul lay in it; and it only needs the concurrence of a few definable possibilities to rouse the savage in our people as well. We have all an untamed instinct, and a capacity and readiness for "war and fightings."

The root-cause of this is doubtless the uncured depravity of mankind; but the evil owes its strength and its perpetuity to the fact that the Gospel of Christ is, to a large extent, a hidden Gospel, and a perverted Gospel.

The religion of Jesus, meaning by that the religion of

the Bible, was the first, the only religion ever known to man which inseparably joined morality to the worship of God. Its Redemption is a redemption from all iniquity. Its Salvation is a salvation from sin. Its course of duty is hearing Christ's words and doing them. Its essence, and end, and evidence, is the "Doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God,"—integrity and purity growing to perfection in the holiness, without which, no man shall see the Lord.

But the spirit of the old superstition, of religion without morality, comes back again, as does the old war-spirit, and finds at least a covert in our conventional Christianity. Nor can we cast the blame of this on Rome, and disclaim participation in the sin.

The theology we have inherited from the Reformation, of the unction of which we can talk most unctuously, can be in our schools and churches a well arranged anatomical preparation of Christian doctrine, dry as very "dry bones." We do not sufficiently discern that the spirit of evil can tolerate any profession of faith, if the professors only keep estranged from Christ's life in their life; and that the same spirit can protest as loudly as any that "Salvation by faith is the article of a standing or falling church," if people will only be content with protesting.

And all over, in the teaching and conception of Christianity, so many fail to perceive, and dislike to be told, when told in earnest, that "*Jesus saves His people from their sins.*"

Beliefs of some kind or other, or emotions of some kind or other, are placed in front, instead of *Christ our life, and our life like Christ's.* The Son of God who loved us, and gave Himself for us—His Cross slaying our enmity—His love constraining us to die with Him to sin, and to rise with Him to newness of life—the forgiveness of sins—the repentance and turning from sin unto God—the following of Jesus in the regeneration, thinking, speaking, acting like Him: That that is salvation by

Christ, salvation by faith, the soul and substance of the Christian religion, giving evidence of its existence and its worth in the good and loving, the upright and faithful life, people have not been distinctly taught in France, nor in Germany, nor here, nor elsewhere.

And we see the consequences abroad and at home, in the great crimes which startle us, and in the general character of our average Christianity, which does not startle us as it should.

For us the lesson is plain. We are saved by faith; but it is faith in the truth and grace of a living, loving, holy Saviour. Trust in the name of Jesus; but hear His words, and do them. Name His name; depart also from all iniquity. Do whatsoever He commands you; then are ye His friends—believing in and loving the Lord, and redeemed by Him. And just as such principles extend, shall the trust of the nations in Christ extend, and the dominion of evil decrease.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. WM. MOORE,

BANK ST. CHURCH, OTTAWA.

"*And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*

"*And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.*

"*And He said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*

"*And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*" Luke ix., 57–62.

THIS passage brings before us three shades of character, and shows how Christ dealt with each of them. The wonderful skill with which his teaching is adapted to the need of each individual, excites our admiration. He does not deal in generali-

ties. With a keen insight He reads the character, discerns the need of the soul, and presents the truth, or requires the course of action, which reveals at once the inherent defect to be remedied, and the method of its cure. His example in this respect ought to be carefully studied and sedulously followed by all who in any wise occupy the position of teacher. We ought to study the character of those with whom we have to do. There is an appropriate time, place, and manner for the utterance of every truth of God. We have not done one whole duty when we have thrown out a sharply-defined truth, and left it to the self-application of the hearer. There is a natural indolence in the heart, which indisposes it for any such work. If sin is to be denounced, it ought to be the sin of the present, not that of a past generation. To denounce and condemn sins of which no one is guilty, only breeds a spirit of self-complacency and pride. True, the condemnation of any one form of sin carries with it the condemnation of every other. Yet the liar, however ready to condemn the drunkard, is very slow to remember that his sentence applies with equal force to himself. The consciences of men must be roused by home thrusts,—by bringing the Word of God to bear directly upon the sins and frailties of which they are partakers. I believe that a vast amount of modern religious teaching misses the mark, and remains comparatively fruitless, simply because it wants adaptability and directness,—because it does not fit into the temper of the times, and does not, with sufficient distinctness, bring home the charge of sin to the conscience. Is the home training adapted to the different ages and temperaments of the children who make up the family circle? Do we, fathers and mothers, patiently study each child's peculiarities of disposition, and do we conscientiously strive to present those aspects of the truth most likely, under God, to effect the regeneration and edification of the soul? I fear not. There are multitudes of men and women who, in connection with the subject of family training, never

seem to manifest the slightest intelligence. The children may work their own sweet will, so long as they do not discommode father or mother, or traverse any of their notions of decency and propriety. But should the children be required for any purpose, if they do not instantly respond to the first call, the call is repeated in loud, angry tones, accompanied sometimes by threats of frightful violence. One afternoon (when I was about nine years of age) a neighbour lad came into our yard to play. After a while, his mother came to the door of her own house, and said, gently, "James, come home: I want you." James heard, but did not heed. Again his mother made her appearance, saying, "Come here instantly, sir, or I will thrash the life out of you." The boy went reluctantly, only to find his way into the street as soon as her back was turned. That mother was, on the whole, a kind-hearted, well-intentioned woman; but she was the creature of impulse. At one time she would punish disobedience with outrageous severity; at another she would carelessly wink at it, or, perhaps, purchase compliance with a promise of goodies. There are others whose whole conception of family training is summed up in, "John, don't do that," "John, don't go there," "Keep off the clean floor," "Don't soil the carpets with your muddy boots." Turn which way the child will, he finds himself hemmed in by an endless chain of prohibitions, which only serve to chafe the spirit and make home distasteful. Others, again, are so nervous and irritable that the children must be quiet as mice, or be visited with a constant stream of reproach. The children soon learn to think of home as a place in which they must not speak above a whisper, or walk, except on tip-toe, and are only too eager to escape from its restraints.

Many fathers seldom exercise their authority, except on the pressure of urgent necessity. And when they do take matters in hand, they deal out their awards so indiscriminately as to be in danger of doing quite as much harm as

good. If a child comes bounding into the room,—its step buoyant with the vitality of youth,—its spirits fairly wild with healthy and hilarious excitement,—eager to tell of some childish exploit, or to receive a fatherly caress after the day's absence, it too frequently meets with a harsh rebuff: "Dont bother me just now. Wife, I do wish you would keep these children in some kind of order. I would like to get a little rest occasionally." And, having thus delivered himself, he returns to the evening paper, satisfied to let his children go to ruin, if only they do not just now interfere with his miserably selfish comfort. Oh, the wrath that such men and women are treasuring up against the time to come! When I think of the many homes in which there is no intelligent training,—of the many professedly Christian families in which such training is reduced to the vanishing point,—my only wonder is that the world is not a great deal worse than we find it. I thank God that we do find, here and there, fathers and mothers who try to do their duty with discrimination and honesty as before God. They are the salt of the earth. Yet, even here, how greatly is the work marred by intermittent attention, and the want of that patient, pains-taking, and affectionate care, which, like the wisdom of God, in its own measure, makes all things work together for good. One child needs repression,—another needs only right guiding,—another needs the stimulus of encouragement. Some are like the sturdy sapling, the storms only make them more stalwart. Others are like the trembling mimosa, and the faintest breath sends a thrill through every fibre of their being; to subject all of these to the same course of treatment, and yet expect a happy result, is surely as preposterous as for a doctor to expect to cure every variety of disease by the use of one specific. Successful teaching requires self-control—a most difficult thing for quick and passionate natures,—requires watchfulness, which is exceedingly irksome to those of a more sluggish temperament,—requires thorough mastery of the

subjects to be taught—a rare thing in this age of superficial accomplishments; in one word, it calls into continuous exercise the best powers of head and heart. Pressure of business will not excuse carelessness. What more important business can any father or mother have than that of fitting their sons and daughters to act worthily their part in life, and helping them to prepare for a blissful and glorious immortality. We do well to provide for the body, but we must also care for the soul. The busiest of us can find space for all manner of social engagements, beside our daily tasks. So long as this is true, our excuse is a most pitiful pretence, and we shall try in vain to arrest judgment with such a worthless plea. I know that faithfulness involves a considerable amount of patient labour, but it is labour that brings its own reward. Every good thing has its price. The price of future comfort to ourselves,—of present and eternal well-being for our children—is present vigilance. If we will not pay the price we cannot have the blessing. Should we neglect the spring time, we must not complain if the autumn brings a harvest of shame and sorrow.

In this connection, I may as well speak of the duty of parents with respect to the training of the schools. Next to the home, the school plays the most important part in developing mental and moral character, and fitting for the work of after life. The utmost carefulness ought to be exercised in the choice of teachers. To talk, as some do, of getting a cheap education, and for this purpose employing inferior teachers, because their services can be had at a lower price, is a suicidal policy. Habits of obedience must be formed; respect for authority must be instilled; these things lie at the foundation of society; without them we have no guarantee for the continuance of order. But this is a work which requires first-class ability for its successful performance. Such service must be paid for. If people will have a *cheap education*, of course they can get it; but to sacrifice the great end of

education for the saving of a few dollars, is surely a foolish proceeding. I know that this matter is in the hands of trustees, and that they may betray their trust, and prostitute their high office, to the accomplishment of unworthy ends. It is the misfortune of humanity that its best things are capable of such perversion; but if we were alive to the importance of our position, they would not do it more than once. If the electors either vote for those who have thus basely betrayed the interests of society, or neglect to bring out better men to take their places, they become sharers of these men's guilt,—they trifle with the sacred responsibilities of Christian freemen, and do an irreparable wrong to succeeding generations. We are members of the body politic. In our own places we are responsible for its corruptions, so far, at least, as they might have been prevented by our exertion. The only way in which we can shake off the charge of complicity in deeds of wickedness, is by doing all we can to prevent them. Pilate could not wash off the guilt of his share in the murder of Christ, by simply washing his hands. He is a coward and a time-server who will suffer things to take their course without remonstrance. We must do battle with the wrong. Not until Christian men unite for the furtherance of Christian objects, and exert the influence to which their numbers entitle them, can we hope for any substantial improvement in the administration of public affairs.

But we turn from the lessons of Christ's example to the consideration of His teaching. The phases of character with which He deals are, over-hastiness, heavy-heartedness, and indecision. Let us look at them in their order. A certain man, Matthew says, a scribe, said unto Him, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." It is sometimes said that this man was mainly actuated by improper motives, and that he hoped to win wealth, station, and political power by thus early giving in his adhesion to the party of the Messiah. Doubtless that may be part of the truth; I think it is not all. He seems to have

been a man of sanguine temperament,—a man who acted more from the impulse of the moment, and a variety of motives, than from any settled principle or conviction. Such men are ready enough to take hold of a seemingly good cause, but equally ready to desert on the first intimation of danger. They are very zealous in the time of prosperity, but their zeal rapidly cools when confronted with unexpected difficulty. As companions, they are pleasant but unreliable. To such fair-weather friends Christ says, "Don't be in a hurry. Count well the cost. You offer to follow me; think what that means. I lead a wandering, restless, and laborious life. The servant is not above his Lord. If you follow me, you must expect to meet with hardship and persecution. Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." He is thus a type of those who receive the word with joy, which, for a while, believe, and, in time of temptation, fall away. The Christian course is not a holiday jaunt, and those who enter upon it need not expect to reach the end without self-denial. The practice of self-restraint, the subduing of evil tempers, the crucifixion of ungodly lusts, the subjection of our whole being to the mind of God,—a regimen to which it is naturally and habitually averse,—these are real labours, and the faithful performance of them will try our mettle to the utmost. Every man who has tried to overcome even one besetting sin, or to deny himself the luxury of some petty indulgence, knows that the resistance of all sin is no child's play. Yet such toilsome labour is the only road to heaven. To begin rashly is to expose ourselves to defeat and disgrace. A man should not undertake the erection of a house without first counting the cost; much less should he be guilty of rashness where defeat covers him with everlasting shame. The profession of faith lightly made will be easily laid aside. The knowledge of trials to be endured will either sift out the worthless, by deterring them at the outset, or it will

beget in those who feel their weakness such a spirit of dependence upon God as will counteract their levity of nature, and thus lift them up to a truer and stronger manhood. One or the other of these results must be true of every such soul to which the Gospel comes. Which shall it be? Will you fly with the chaff, or fall with the grain? You do well to be eager and active; but remember, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv., 26. Count the cost. Deliberately take your place in the strength of God, and then stand to it like a man.

Again, another man comes out from the crowd. To him Jesus said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Jesus said unto him, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Whatever opinion we may adopt as to the precise meaning of this peculiar expression, "Let the dead bury their dead," it is perfectly safe to say that Christ did not mean to teach men to disregard the duties of social life. He came not to destroy human life, but to save it. This man seems to have been of a desponding, melancholic disposition. Such a man always sees the dark side first,—is ready to point out defects, to suggest difficulties, and is slow to move. At the same time, when once fairly committed to any course of action, he may be most resolute and determined in its prosecution. He must be brought face to face with duty in such manner as to compel an instant decision. Hence Christ says, "Let the dead bury the dead; but go *thou* and preach the kingdom of God." In every Christian community there are people who would like *to be* right and *do* right; but at every step they are hampered with doubts and hindered by difficulties. A great deal of the current talk about the difficulties of revelation and the mysteries of religion is pure cant. Many men who know something of God's will, and are conscious of their want of conformity to it, hypocritically pretend

scepticism for the purpose of fighting off the truth. With others, it is a piece of affectation, by means of which they achieve a cheap notoriety. But, after making sufficient allowance for hypocrisy and affectation, there still remains a small portion of honest doubt. As a general thing, however, the difficulties in such cases belong more to the letter, than to the spirit, of revelation. I have seldom met with really honest men who had much difficulty respecting the essentials of religion. Where there is trouble, it is most frequently connected with questions of criticism and the harmony of doctrine. In some cases these speculative difficulties are as flimsy and unsubstantial as a cob-web. In others they touch the deepest problems of existence,—problems, the solution of which the omnipotent God has kept in His own power. With the first it were better not to meddle in the meantime. Our eyes are but human, and even a cob-web may give us blinding pain. As for the others, it were wise humbly to recognize and confess the necessary limitations of our being. We need not be ashamed to acknowledge that we have no line wherewith to fathom the deeps of God's unsearchable wisdom. But what then? Are we to ignore our doubts, and hypocritically profess a faith we have not? No, most assuredly not! There are truths respecting which you have no doubt; there are duties, the obligation of which is imperatively felt. Leave the others in abeyance for the present. Take fast hold of what is plain. Follow the light you have; try to live in the spirit of Christ, and your experience of this portion of God's teaching will help you to understand the rest. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." John vii., 17. The truth is one divine system, and there is an experimental evidence which is quite as satisfying as demonstration. Sometimes, however, the difficulty is more of an experimental character, and bears directly on the question of our personal relation to God. Am I His child? Have I really believed, or am I deceiving my

own soul? For such difficulties there is no theoretic solution. To say that every true child of God is certain of the fact of his regeneration, and thence, because a man has not this certainty, infer that he is not a Christian, is simply a piece of spiritual quackery. God does not always give to those who seek a full assurance from the outset. Jacob got it only after he had wrestled all night in prayer, and even then it was coupled with a constant reminder of his inherent weakness and dependence: "As he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh." Gen. xxxii., 31. What shall we say, then, to the desponding inquirer who would gladly go forward, but cannot, lest a worse thing might come upon him? We say, don't look in upon your own heart. Don't insist upon a token of acceptance as the condition of obedience. Look to Christ. Cast yourself on God's infinite mercy. You know what is right. Go on and do it in the fear of God. Leave the rest in the Master's hand, and when the right time comes He will give you the sign. The only way to shake off the incubus of doubt and fear is to strike out vigorously. Action will break the spell, and when that is done, the living soul will be its own best witness to the grace of God.

In the last place. A third person comes on the scene. This man, like the first, offers himself, but accompanies his offer with a reservation: "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house." As I take it, this man was a half-hearted, undecided character. He may have had a clear perception of the truth, and some desire for its service, but there was in him, with all, a hankering after other things. His heart was divided, inclining sometimes to one side and sometimes to the other. Hence Christ says to him, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." An undecided, hesitating man is thoroughly unreliable. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." James i., 8.

We cannot count upon his movements with any confidence. If he is a politician, he may be found trimming his sails to every breeze. He is afraid to break with his party lest he should injure his prospects, yet he is afraid to fall in heartily with it for the very same reason. Such conduct may seem to prosper for a while, but in the long run it lands in bankruptcy. Notwithstanding his apparent popularity, he is secretly despised. The honours of the world are reserved for those who risk something for them. The sin of indecision is fatal to success. There are many people who act in this way with Christ. They would like to keep in with Him, hence they patronize the Church; they would like to keep in with the world, and hence they sail as close to the wind as possible. But, my friends, there is no room for such guilty fickleness in the Christian life. Compromise is impossible: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew vi., 24. We cannot play fast and loose with Christ. He will have the whole heart or nothing. God will not divide the house with another. "Because thou art luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Rev. iii., 16. God will reject half-hearted service with abhorrence. Decide once for all, and decide now. Choose your side, and stick to it. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings xviii., 21. May God in His infinite mercy, for Christ's sake, help us all to choose "that good part which shall not be taken away." Luke x., 42.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. WILLIAM WALKER,

WELLINGTON STREET CHURCH, CHATHAM.

"*There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him: Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*" *John iii*, 1-2.

THERE is not much said about Nicodemus in Scripture. He is referred to on only three occasions in the Word of God, and he is not spoken of by any of the inspired writers, with the exception of the apostle John. Though there is but little said of Nicodemus in Scripture, there is enough to afford material for our instruction. Nicodemus, we are told, was a ruler of the Jews: that is, he was a member of the Sanhedrim, or Supreme Court, of the Jewish nation. In the opinion of some persons, the Sanhedrim was instituted in the days of Moses; but it is doubtful that it existed prior to the time of the Maccabees. Its functions, as well as its origin, are involved in obscurity. In the opinion

of some persons, it took cognizance of every thing of importance that transpired in the nation; but it has been questioned that it took notice of what was not deemed religious in its nature or bearings. Whatever may have been the functions of this court, it is certain that it did take cognizance of religious matters. This court examined and condemned Jesus; and, not having the power of putting to death, in consequence of the presence of the Romans in the country, delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, in order that their sentence might be carried out, and Jesus crucified. The Sanhedrim was composed of 70 or 72 members, who are described, in general terms, in Scripture, as chief priests, elders, and scribes. These chief priests were, probably, the heads of the various orders belonging to the priesthood; and the elders and scribes were, doubtless, the foremost and most influential public men of the nation, outside the priesthood. Nicodemus, therefore, was a man of note. He was, in his day, one of the 70 most prominent and distinguished men of his country. Nicodemus deserves praise for coming to Jesus. How many of his countrymen, in his position, never came to Christ! How many persons, in our own day, do not draw near to the blessed Redeemer. No doubt there are drawbacks in this remarkable man's visit to Christ; still, his coming to Jesus at all, with a good purpose, deserves to be commended and imitated.

It was by night that Nicodemus came to Jesus. Was the time of the visit accidental, or was it designed? On the supposition that it was the result of design, was night chosen because of the pressure of work by day, or because he wished his visit to be concealed from the public. It is generally believed that Nicodemus went to Jesus by night, that his visit to Him might be as little known as possible. Jesus was already disliked by the members of the Sanhedrim, and other leading men in the nation; and Nicodemus, having as yet but imperfect views of the mission and claims of Christ, wished to conceal that he was in corres-

pondence with Him. The manner in which Nicodemus introduced himself to Jesus was respectful and candid. He said to Him: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." He acknowledges he believes that Jesus wrought miracles; that God was with Him; and that, therefore, He was a teacher "come from God." This conceded much, very much, but it did not concede enough. If Jesus wrought miracles, and if God was with Him, then He was what He professed and claimed to be. He was the Messiah, or, as John the Baptist publicly expressed it, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." But pre-conceived opinions are often too strong for logic. They often so warp our judgment as to prevent us from reaching those sound conclusions to which the portion of truth we have already received naturally and obviously leads. The Jews had imbibed erroneous views concerning the character and mission of the Messiah; and, inasmuch as Christ, when he appeared, did not answer their expectations, they rejected Him. Perhaps Nicodemus, like the majority of his countrymen, had fallen into error in relation to the Messiah, and that this was the cause why he withheld so much from Christ while he admitted so much. Though Nicodemus did not concede to Jesus all that he ought to have conceded, the Saviour treated him with kindness, and entered into conversation with him, and so acted in accordance with the ancient prophecy relating to Himself: "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." The conversation is recorded in the chapter of which the text forms part, and extends from the third to twenty-second verse. Though the outlines only of the great Teacher's communication of truth to Nicodemus are given, yet the whole passage is deeply interesting and eminently instructive. Every lover of divine truth ought to make himself thoroughly acquainted with it. "Jesus answered and said unto him: Verily,

verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Although Nicodemus was a master in Israel,—although he was a member of the court which took cognizance of religious matters, and, as such, ought to have been well acquainted with theology, yet he did not understand those words. He was obviously in a condition of gross ignorance in relation to the important doctrine of regeneration. In reply to what Christ had said on this vital subject, "Nicodemus saith unto Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?'" If other considerations did not forbid entertaining any such thought, it might be imagined that those words of the Jewish ruler were tainted with flippancy or with sarcasm. They are simply, however, the outcome of ignorance, in conjunction with natural acuteness. The great Teacher meets this ignorance of Nicodemus with great kindness and condescension. He repeats and amplifies his original statement: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Nicodemus was still unable to comprehend the great truth thus fully and forcibly set before him; his mind was not yet prepared for its reception. From the statement of this great doctrine, Jesus proceeded to mention and explain other important truths. He spoke of his being "lifted up," as "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness"; of the necessity of faith in Himself, in order to obtaining salvation; of the love of God to sinful men, and of their depraved state. What the effect of this instruction was on the mind and heart of Nicodemus, we do not know. The whole Gospel was preached to him, though with great brevity; but he seems to have left the presence of the great Teacher without giving any sign of conversion to God, or of adherence to Christ as his Lord and Saviour. There can be no doubt,

however, that Nicodemus was benefited by his visit to our Saviour. Truth was placed in his heart by Him who is the Lord of the heart, and, if it did not produce visible effects at the time, it did so afterwards.

When next we see and hear Nicodemus, he is in the Sanhedrim. He there openly defends Jesus. And, as in his conversation with the Messiah, he did not concede enough, so, in the Supreme Court, he did not defend Him enough. There is still much lacking, but, perhaps, not so much as formerly. The circumstances, indeed, are different; but there is surely more boldness than before. The words which he used in the Sanhedrim are recorded in the seventh chapter of this Gospel, and are these: "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth." To see their bearing, and feel their force, it is necessary to consider the circumstances in which they were spoken. Jesus had appeared, and preached with great boldness and publicity in Jerusalem. His doctrine had attracted much attention, and caused much excitement. It had led the inhabitants of the metropolis, and the visitors to it, to discuss whether he was the long promised Messiah. The Pharisees heard all this, were alarmed, and adopted measures to check what they doubtless considered a growing evil. "And the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him." The officers went to Jesus, and found Him discoursing in the temple, but they did not "take Him." "His hour was not yet come," and they were under the necessity of returning empty-handed to their masters. On their return, the chief priests and Pharisees said unto them, "Why have ye not brought Him." Their reply is very remarkable, it was this: "Never man spake like this man." They must have been most favourably impressed with Christ to speak thus in the presence of persons who were known to be his bitter enemies, and who were their employers,—upon whose support they, perhaps, depended for their living. The chief priests and Pharisees were enraged because their

officers had failed to "take" Jesus, and had dared to praise the manner in which he spoke; and they gave expression to their disappointment and rage by these words, "Are ye also deceived?" "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" "The people who knoweth not the law are cursed." Nicodemus, who was present, spoke at this juncture, and his words, which are few, are these: "Doth our law judge *i. e.* condemn any man before it hear him, or know what he doeth?" The law had been mentioned, and it had been stated that people who are ignorant of the law are cursed: "But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed." Nicodemus takes up this point, and shows that those councillors who condemned Jesus were acting not in accordance with the law, but in opposition to it. It is as if he had said, "We, as a court, have not heard Jesus,—have not examined His works. Individuals amongst us may have heard them, and witnessed His alleged miracles; but, as a body, and in our judicial capacity, we have done nothing of the kind. How, then, can we legally condemn Him? How find fault with Him? How pronounce those persons who are favourable to Him accursed?" The council seem to have regarded the words of Nicodemus as indicating that he was a disciple of Jesus, or, at least, that he was favourable to Him: for, "they answered and said unto him, art thou also of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." The council were so far right in this instance. Nicodemus was favourable to Jesus. The words which he spoke in behalf of Jesus are, indeed, very few, and the argument is distant and indirect; still, they manifest a friendly spirit to Jesus; and, meagre and imperfect though this defence of Christ is, be it remembered that it was made in the highest court in the country, and in the presence of His most bitter and implacable enemies. Blame Nicodemus we may for want of courage and decision; but we must, at the same time, admit that he raised the standard of Christ in the very

citadel of His foes. And there was danger to him in doing this. The power of the council was great. They could inflict almost any temporal punishment, death excepted. But nothing of the nature of punishment was attempted. God restrained them, for there was more work for this ruler to do. Accordingly the council rose, "And every man went into his own house."

Nicodemus is mentioned in Scripture on only one other occasion, in the 19th chapter of this Gospel, "And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now, in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand." Jesus had been betrayed by Judas to the Sanhedrim, and that court had adjudged Him worthy of death. Pilate, the Roman Governor, with whom lay the power of putting to death, urged by the Sanhedrim and the Jewish people to order Him to be crucified, had, though convinced of His innocence, issued the demanded order, and Jesus had just expired in great agony. At this juncture, Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple, approached Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus to bury it. In burying the body, he was joined by Nicodemus, who "brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight." Perhaps also he was joined by Nicodemus in taking the body down from the cross. Nicodemus, as well as Joseph, seems to have conquered his fears; his former timidity and half measures appear to have given place to boldness

and devotedness to Christ. And the circumstances in which these qualities were manifested greatly enhance their value. The Shepherd had been smitten, and the sheep had been scattered. The cause of Christ seemed, to the carnal eye, entirely lost: for the Messiah was dead, and His body was about to be laid in the grave. Nevertheless Nicodemus, who had never before associated with the followers of Jesus,—who had visited the Messiah only once, and in secret,—who was a member of a court which was bitterly hostile to the Saviour, and who was almost silent in the council when he had a most favourable opportunity of speaking in behalf of Christ,—nevertheless this man, in this most trying hour, took Christ's part in a most decided and public manner. The instruction which he had received from Jesus during that hidden visit was now visibly influencing his heart and life. The good seed of the word sown so long ago was now bearing fruit to the honour of Christ and the support of His cause. May we not indulge the pleasing thought that Nicodemus was now a genuine disciple of the Saviour? No doubt sympathy for a murdered person,—for a martyred "teacher come from God," will prompt him in whose heart it dwells to do and dare much on behalf of the innocent victim. But may it not be that Nicodemus had now experienced the truth to which his attention had been directed in his interview with the Redeemer; and that, at the last day, he will be amongst those who will rejoice in the fulfilment of His promise: "Whosoever, therefore, will confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in Heaven.

CONCLUSION.

1. The persons who believed in Christ in the days of His flesh were, for the most part, poor and unlearned; but they were not all indigent and illiterate. If Nicodemus was not a rich man, like Joseph of Arimathea, he was

probably a learned man. Had he not occupied an eminent position, he would not have been appointed a member of the Sanhedrim. The humble circumstances of Christ's first disciples, in general, affords an irrefragable argument for the divine origin of Christianity; and the fact that such men as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea took the side of Jesus, strengthens, rather than weakens, this argument. It shows, at least, that those sceptical objections to Christ, which rest on the assumption that the first followers of the Redeemer were all poor and unlearned, rest on a false assumption.

2. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, he said to Him, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." The miracles of Christ are one of the chief sources of evidence that Christianity is of divine origin. They are one of the principal citadels of our most holy faith, and, as such, they have been often assailed by sceptics. The battle between Scepticism and Faith has raged longer and more furiously here than anywhere else. It commenced when our Lord was on earth, and it is not yet terminated. The Jews admitted that our Lord wrought miracles, but they insisted that He performed them by the power of the Devil. They were not able to deny that He wrought works which were superhuman, but, resolved not to admit His claims, they ascribed His works to the power of Beelzebub. Christ Himself met and repelled this attack upon the signs of His Messiahship. He said: "If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand; and if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end." His miracles and doctrines were subversive of the kingdom of evil. He came to destroy the works of the Devil; and His works, words, and manner of life were eminently fitted to accomplish this. It is, therefore, utterly inconceivable that Satan

would endow Him with power to work signs and wonders. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." That Satan should oppose Christ is intelligible; that he should aid Him is incredible and incomprehensible. The ancient heathen writers against Christianity agreed with the unbelieving Jews in conceding that Jesus wrought miracles; but they maintained that their gods had also wrought miracles. They were willing to admit that Jesus was a God; but they held that there were other gods. This argument was, doubtless, satisfactory to Greek and Roman polytheists, but its fallacy is very apparent. Their gods had not wrought miracles,—the objects of their worship were mere idols. While the Jewish and ancient heathen unbelievers admit that Jesus wrought miracles, modern sceptics deny that He did. They see clearly that if Jesus wrought signs and wonders, as alleged, they must grant that He is what He claimed to be, the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners.

Some sceptics say that the alleged miracles of Jesus are only tricks of natural magic, or acts of legerdemain. This objection is wholly at variance with the character and teaching of Christ. The author of the Sermon on the Mount could not descend to trickery in order to deceive. Moreover, it is utterly impossible to explain Christ's miracles on this theory. By what natural magic could the blind and dumb and lame be enabled to see, hear and walk? By what sleight of hand could raging winds and waves be calmed, or the dead be raised? Some other sceptics say that Jesus not only wrought no miracles, but He did not even claim to have wrought them.—They hold that Jesus was a wise and good man,—the greatest man that ever was in the world; that after His death, His admirers began to fancy all sorts of wonderful things about Him, and at last came to believe that He wrought miracles,—that the idea of miracles, which originated wholly in man's love of the marvellous, gradually, in the course of years, assumed the form in which

we now find it in Scripture, and in the teachings of Christians. There are many insuperable objections to this theory. The miracles of Christ did not gradually assume the form in which they are recorded in Scripture. The accounts we have of them in Scripture were written by persons who were well acquainted with the facts which they have put upon record, and who suffered the "loss of many things" for espousing the cause of the Redeemer. Moreover, those accounts were published during the lifetime of thousands who saw the signs and wonders which Jesus wrought, and were never called in question in the first ages. On the contrary, their accuracy was admitted by both unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. It may be true that man has a love for the marvellous, and that many fables have been originated since the world began. But because some alleged miracles may be resolved into man's love of the marvellous, does it follow that Christ's may? Because history contains some false legends, does it follow that all history is false? The only other sceptical opinion which shall be noticed has Hume for its author. He taught that we can never obtain evidence that a miracle had been wrought. Not only does he deny all miracles, but he denies also the possibility of proving a miracle. His theory leaves no room for the existence of God, or at least for God's exercise of His power. Let, however, the existence of God, and His ability to work miracles, be admitted, and the argument of Hume loses all its force: "So long as we abide in the region of nature, miraculous and improbable, miraculous and incredible, may be allowed to remain convertible terms; but once lift up the whole discussion into a higher region,—once acknowledge aught higher than nature, and the whole argument loses its strength, and the force of its conclusions." "His argument is as that of the fabled giant, unconquerable so long as it is permitted to rest upon the earth out of which it sprang; but easily destroyed when once it is lifted into a higher world."

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY THE LATE REV. DR. BURNS,

TORONTO.

THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

"*The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead; And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.*" II. COR. v. 14, 15.

IT is the glory of the gospel, that its leading discoveries, are at once *grounds of consolation, and principles of practice.* They are *grounds of consolation*—when we consider the light which they throw on the divine character and government; the interesting views they present of the person and work of Christ; and the infinitely precious promises which they secure to believers. They are *principles of practice* when we reflect on the great prac-

tical design which they are destined to serve in the regeneration of men ; and the animating motives which they furnish to personal holiness. It is wrong to view the discoveries of the Gospel in one of these lights to the exclusion or neglect of the other. By so doing we injure the Gospel. We mar its holy beauty. We deprive its parts of their admirable proportions and harmony. We extract from it, its native spirit. We divest it of its high and holy attributes as the "power of God" and "the wisdom of God."

Throughout the whole range of divine revelation there is no fact in which the view now stated is more strikingly verified than in the death of our divinely glorious Redeemer. In the representations of Scripture we find that the sufferings and death of Jesus are uniformly associated with all that is interesting to man in regard to consolation, and in regard to practical godliness. Is a bright display of *unparalleled love* well fitted to console the mind of a trembling penitent? "Herein is love." Are the tidings of deliverance from the greatest of evils calculated to awaken every feeling of gratitude and joy? "We have redemption through his blood." Is the offer of pardon "good news" to a criminal ready to die? "God hath set forth his son as a propitiation." If the doctrine of Christ's death thus gives peace and joy to the believer, it likewise exerts a holy influence on his temper and conduct. Is he required to hate sin and to cultivate practical godliness in life and conversation? "Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Ought we to give ot our good things to supply the wants of the needy? Here is the motive. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ought we to cherish brotherly kindness and mutual love? The grand consideration is, "Christ loved us and give himself for us." Ought we to bear with one another and to forgive one another? The overpowering argument is, "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Does it become an established believer to bear with the infirmities

of the weak, and to receive an erring or overscrupulous brother into the bonds of mutual love? The endearing consideration is, "he is thy brother for whom Christ died." In fine, is it the indispensable duty of Christians not only to believe the record of life by Jesus Christ, but also to believe in the practice of all holiness and good works. "The love of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge, &c."

From these words we propose to direct your attention to the death of the Redeemer as *the great principle of practical godliness.* The apostle is engaged in the duty of practical exhortation. In the course of his address he indirectly adverts to the charge brought by the enemies of the cross against him and his brethren. That they were the subjects of mental derangement or of wild enthusiasm. "Be it so" saith the apostle. "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause, for the love of Christ, &c." No wonder that an ignorant and blinded world should pity or deride us as madmen or as fanatics. "The world knoweth us not even as it knew him not." To the principles on which we act and the plan of conduct we pursue, they are entire strangers. In our minds, and throughout the whole compass of our lives, a principle of mighty efficacy is perpetually in action; but, of this principle and of its modes of operation, they are profoundly ignorant. And what may that principle be? It is the love of Christ in dying for us; "*for the love.*" The apostle and his brethren were practically constrained by the death of Christ to live not unto themselves but the Lord. And as the death of Christ has still the same place in the Christian scheme as heretofore, it must still have the same practical influence over the hearts and lives of believers.

Let us then in humble dependence on grace from above endeavour *first*, to take a view of the death of Christ as the great and commanding principle of practical godliness: And then, *secondly*, to deduce from it those particular con-

clusions to which it leads, as illustrative of the moral tendency of the Gospel and the experience and habits of true believers.

I. The general doctrine of the death of the son of God as represented in the page of Scripture, must be perfectly familiar to your minds. In a great variety of language the sacred writers both of the Old and of the New Testaments have told us that Jesus the eternal Son of God gave his life as a ransom for many; that he did, bear our sins in his own body on the tree; that he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; that he was cut off but not for himself; that there is redemption through his blood; that he was made sin for us through he knew no sin; that he *made peace* by the blood of his cross; and that, in the fountain of his blood, ransomed men have washed their robes and made them white. The great truth which these and similar passages contain is one that has ever been dear to the hearts of Christians, that the death of the Redeemer is the foundation of hope; that by the merits of his obedience unto death sinners are justified and accepted before God; and that, in the whole economy of salvation from first to last, "grace reigns through righteousness."

The death of Christ then must not be viewed in the light of a simple fact or event under the government of heaven, however remarkable that fact or event may be; we must not view it merely as the solemn attestation given by a martyr to the truth of his doctrine and the veracity of his claims; we must not look upon it simply as a sublime example of patient submission to the will of the Almighty. We must contemplate it in its higher and nobler relations as the price of salvation, and the pledge of a blessed immortality. We must stand still, and with profound reverence survey it as the grand centre of the divine dispensations towards guilty man; as the noblest display of divine love; and as the fountain of life opened to a perishing race of guilty immortals. Far from shrink-

ing from the contemplation of Christ's death in this its *atoning* and *redeeming* character, it is precisely in this character we propose to consider it as the peculiar principle of practical godliness. It is "the love of Christ" in "dying for us" which constrains the believer to live not unto himself, but unto him, who died for him and who rose again.

1. The "death of Christ" is the grand principle of practical godliness, when we consider the views which it exhibits of the *moral character of God.*

We place this first in order, because right views of the character of God lie at the foundation of all moral and religious duty. If we entertain erroneous and unworthy conceptions of the great object of worship, our worship instead of tending as it ought to holiness, will rather alienate the mind farther and farther from it. Besides, it is certain that the character of the worshipper must in a great measure be found according to the model which his devotions habitually bring before him; and if that model be an imperfect and impure one, the effect on the heart and life of the worshipper must be exceedingly pernicious. On the slightest view we can take of the death of Christ, we find in it, the grandest and most decisive display of *divine love.* Far from proceeding on the assumption that God was *implacable*, it *presupposes* the love of God to man as the original ground-work of his salvation. The mediatorial scheme, instead of being the cause of divine love, is in fact its noblest effect. In the text and in various other places, the death of the Son of God is spoken of as the most conspicuous display that was ever given, of the lovingkindness of God to a fallen world; as the most complete demonstration of God's gracious designs towards men; and as the surest pledge of forgiveness to the trembling penitent. "God *commendeth* his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Does the death of Christ, then, exhibit the most astonishing display of that love which comprehends in it all the gracious at-

tributes of the Almighty? Its practical effect in this view of it, is salutary and delightful. It "constraineth us" to "love Him who first loved us:" to cherish feelings of liveliest gratitude to all the persons of the blessed Trinity; and to *consecrate* the life, which has been redeemed, to the glory and praise of the Redeemer.

But goodness is not the only attribute of Jehovah and, had the death of Jesus afforded us a display of goodness alone, its moral influence would have been exceedingly limited. Were the gospel of Jesus a dispensation of mere benevolence, it would have given us an imperfect and inadequate conception of the moral character of Jehovah. But it is a fact singularly deserving our attention, that the death of the Redeemer, while it affords us a most stupendous display of the grace and love of the great Father of all, presents to us also his moral character under the commanding attributes of *rectitude* and of *holiness*. "Jesus died for our sins according to the scriptures," that he might "magnify the law" by enduring its penalty; that he might vindicate the honor of the Lawgiver; that he might attest the purity of his character and afford to all worlds a most affecting demonstration of this eternal law, that *sin shall not dwell with God*. Jehovah was inclined to show mercy to guilty men; but in order that this mercy might be displayed in a manner perfectly consistent with the holiness of his character and the rectitude of his government, he was pleased to demand and to accept a substitute in place of the criminal actually offending. Now, it is this union of *grace* and of *justice;* this harmony of *mercy* and *truth;* this beautiful combination of *purity* and *love*, which gives a peculiar charm and interest to the death of the Redeemer; which stamps it with the characters of wisdom; and which gives to it a constraining efficacy. Were benevolence the *only* attribute which beams from the cross of Calvary, men might have been tempted to presumption and false confidence. Were *justice*, again, the only attribute which shines

conspicuous in the economy of redemption by the cross, men might have been left to all the gloomy horrors of despondence and despair. By the union of *both*; *love* and *fear* are cherished in social harmony; *love* to attract, *fear* to overawe; *love* to enthrone the Saviour in the heart; *fear*, to retain him ever in the eye; *fear*, to avoid whatever may offend; *love*, to yield a prompt and liberal obedience; *love*, to render us active and resolute; *fear*, to make us watchful and circumspect; *love*, "beseeching" tenderly, yet powerfully, "by the mercies of God;" *fear*, "persuading" powerfully, yet tenderly, "by the terrors of the Lord."

There is still another idea which belongs to the illustration of this part of the subject. Those very attributes of God which render the obedience of his rational creatures peculiarly reasonable and becoming, are at the same time so many barriers in the way of a criminal's approach to him. They place him under a *legal disqualification;* for the traitor against his Sovereign is not *entitled* to the honor of being permitted to serve him. The very thought of spotless purity and inflexible rectitude in array against him overwhelm him with terror; and that *filial love*, which is the only spring of acceptable obedience, gives place to *slavish alarm*. It is by the crucifixion of the Son of God and his vicarious atonement that this barrier is removed; and the criminal, awakened to a sense of his danger, is at once *entitled* and *qualified* to serve his reconciled Sovereign with a cheerful obedience. "God in Christ reconciling the guilty to himself," becomes the object of cordial attachment. The law no longer overwhelms him with its thunders. A *liberty* to serve is given, and this is cherished as a singular privilege. *Willingness* to serve is felt in all its earnestness; and the language of his experience will be verified in the tenor of his life. "I will run in the way of thy commandments when thou hast enlarged my heart."

2. The death of Christ is the grand principle of holi-

ness, when we consider the views which it unfolds of the *moral administration of God.*

Even the light of nature may suffice to convince us that the same power which called the universe into being continues to superintend and govern it. Men, who reject the gospel of Jesus altogether, may nevertheless acknowledge the general doctrine of the divine administration. If then the atoning character of the death of Christ be set aside ; if that great event be removed from the *peculiar* place which it holds in the economy of the gospel ; we deprive the Christian scheme of its distinguishing character as a *new* dispensation of the Almighty. There is no *new* view afforded of the government of God ; no new discovery of wisdom and grace, and no new motives to holiness furnished.

On the other hand, when we contemplate the death of Christ in its *singular character*, as an event altogether unparalleled and altogether incapable of being paralleled ; as associated with all that is great, and lovely in the divine character ; and as exercising an influence peculiar to itself over the present and over the ultimate condition of men ; how magnificent the display which is given ! how delightfully grand the scene which is opened ! There is a discovery absolutely *new* and unheard of before ; a discovery—bright and overpowering of the grace and wisdom of the Creator. There is a new evidence afforded of God's supreme dominion over men ; his absolute sovereignty, and his special regard to the subjects of his everlasting love. There is a *new view* given of the *place* which man holds in the scale of creation, and in the economy of the Creator. There is a new and most gratifying assurance afforded us of the fact, that this globe of ours, however insignificant it may be amid the immensity of the works of God, occupies no mean place in the arrangements of heaven ; that it is the theatre marked out by infinite wisdom on which to display the grandest of its operations ; and that from eternity it was the object of tender regard

to Him who before the world was "rejoiced in the habitable parts of *his* earth while his delights were with the children of men." There is a new illustration given us of the sublime truth that all the parts of God's dominions are connected together as one great monarchy; that the transactions, which take place in one province, affect in some way or other the beings who inhabit another province; that the fall and recovery of man are events too great in themselves, and too eventful in their consequences to be overlooked by the inhabitants of more distant and more extended spheres; and that with the cross of the Redeemer are linked in close and indissoluble union, the interests and honors of God's universal empire. The scheme of redemption by the death of Christ is part of a great and harmoniously organized system. We see only a little way; but what we do see, tends by its grandeur to give us high anticipations of what remains to be disclosed. We are permitted to mark the progressive movement of a mighty scheme, but the commencement and termination of the scheme itself are among the "things which eye hath not seen."

And now, what is the practically constraining influence of all this? It enlarges the faculties of the soul, and gives to its aims and habits a sublime and holy elevation. It raises above the "dull level of mortality;" and by bringing the things of time into comparison and even into contact with the matters of eternity, it lessens the world in our esteem; withdraws our affections from its monopolising grasp; and induces a wise and holy indifference to the pursuits of sense. It gives us a deeper and more affecting view of the majesty of Jehovah and of our absolute insignificance before him; and it thus teaches us humility, self-abasement, and holy awe in his presence. It affects our souls with a more profound sense of their infinite value in the great scale of the divine administration; the vast importance of spiritual things, and the awfully solemn realities of eternity. In fine, it opens up to us a delightful

discovery of the unity, the harmony, and the beauty of the great scheme of the divine administration, while it leads us to repose in mental peace on the gracious care and boundless beneficence of the great parent of all. All this you will acknowledge to be of a highly moral and practical tendency; and yet all this necessarily follows from the love of Jesus in giving his life as a ransom for many.

3. The death of Christ is the grand principle of holiness when we consider the views which it has given of the *law* and of *sin* as its trangression.

Just views of the law of God stand at the very threshold of all moral and religious attainment. Without a proper conception of the rule by which we are to walk, we cannot cherish a due impression of sin which is its violation or of holiness which constitutes its fulfilment. Hence it is, that those who neglect the gospel, and are careless of its requisitions, are found in general to entertain the most loose and inadequate conceptions of the nature, extent, and obligation of the divine law. They either exclude it entirely from their thoughts, or they lower its high and holy requisitions; or they confine it within a very limited range of jurisdiction; or they maintain its perfect compatibility with the existence of sin.

If we examine these erroneous views of the law of God which are so extensively prevalent even among Christian professors, we may find reason to think that they very frequently arise from a defective and unscriptural conception of the death of the Redeemer. When its vicarious character and atoning efficacy are overlooked; when men allow themselves to think that sin is such a trivial thing as to require no compensation for the injury it hath done; and that God will very readily accept of sincere, though imperfect obedience—what are the views of the divine law which they must necessarily have formed? By no means can it appear to them in that high and dignified light in which the Scriptures exhibit it, as a transcript of the divine character, as, like its great original, inflexible in rectitude

and unspotted in holiness, as forbidding even the smallest or most distant approaches to sin, as demanding satisfaction for every insult on its honor, and as denouncing the vengeance of heaven against every deviation from the line it has prescribed. On the other hand, when we adopt the Scriptural view of the death of the Son of God as a proper atonement for sin, and as the only basis of hope for ruined man; how high will be our views of the extent of the law, and how deep our impressions of the evil of sin! The law of God is so holy and so strict; so vast in its extent of jurisdiction; and so inflexible in its righteous demands, that nothing less than the blood of "*God's own Son*" could expiate the guilt attendant on its transgression, or satisfy its high demands. Had it been consistent with the rectitude of the law, and the honor of the law-giver, to pardon sin without an atonement, we may rest assured that the "precious blood of God's own Son" would never have been shed for an unnecessary purpose. The simple historical *fact*, that God's own Son gave himself up to death in its most awful form, goes farther than a thousand arguments to prove that the penalty demanded by the law *must* be paid, and that its violated right *must* be vindicated, that a sublime and consistent view is thus afforded us of the majesty of Jehovah, and the righteous principles of his holy administration.

If such are the views which the death of Jesus gives us of the purity of the law, and the evil of sin as a violation of it, it requires no laboured argument to prove that they carry along with them a powerfully constraining efficacy. Can we deliberately and habitually violate the requisitions of that law, whose vindication demanded the sufferings and death of "Emanuel, God with us?" Can we slight or contemn the mandates of the law which, amid the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, has denounced a curse on the slightest deviation from it? Can we deliberately and voluntarily cherish the love of sin, whose tendency and whose aim it is to dethrone Omnipotence, and to

spread desolation and death over the fairest portions of His empire? Can we, with the full consent of our wills, continue in the practice of that which brought the Son of God from heaven to earth, and which nailed him to the accursed tree? A professor of religion may imagine that he believes all this, and yet continue in sin. But a true believer will and must evince his faith by his deeds. He will love the law, because it is the image of its author. He will hate sin and avoid it, because it mars and destroys that image. He will be constrained to holiness by the death of Jesus, because Jesus died to restore him to the image and enjoyment of his Maker. This leads me to notice :—

4. In the *last* place, that the death of Christ is the grand principle of holiness, when we consider the view which it gives of *the place which holiness is designed to occupy in the economy of redemption.*

We have only to reflect for a moment on the grand and comprehensive object which the death of the Son of God is destined to secure. In one sense, indeed, and that a just and Scriptural one, its leading design is to rescue man from the guilt of sin as the greatest of evils, and to exalt him to the enjoyment of the noblest blessings. But there is a something even beyond this in the great plan of Omniscient wisdom. Jesus likewise died that he might redeem men from the spiritual slavery of sin, and bring them to the resemblance and obedience and enjoyment of God. Indeed these may be considered, and justly, as constituting together one grand and united design. Jesus died to deliver us from evil. But sin is the greatest of evils, and the cause of all others. Until therefore deliverance *from sin itself* is achieved, there can be no deliverance from evil. Until men are brought to *hate* sin, they must remain its abject slaves; and so long as they are its abject slaves, they must share in the wages of that slavery. Now, on this view of the case, the absolute and indispensable necessity of personal holiness ap-

pears peculiarly prominent. *Without* it, the primary design of the Saviour's death cannot be accomplished. Without it, the Saviour would want the trophies of his grace, and his blood would have been shed in vain. Without it, heaven would be deprived of its inhabitants; and the Sovereign of heaven of his revenue of glory. "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, &c." By his death he secured, and, by his life in glory, he bestows those gracious influences of the Spirit by which, and by which alone, the souls of men are purified and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Holiness thus occupies a most distinguished place in the economy of the Divine procedure. Its interests were consulted in the councils of eternal wisdom, and in all the subsequent dispensations of the Almighty they have held a prominent place. Christ's glories shone conspicuous from the cross of Calvary, and its triumphs shall swell the chorus of celestial praise. Holiness is the character of heaven, and through eternity this shall be the song of its inhabitants:—"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."

II. Let us now attend to those particular conclusions to which our subject leads in connection with the moral tendency of the gospel, and the experience and habits of true believers.

1. The subject considered affords us a striking illustration of the *truth* and *excellence* of the Christian system. Independent altogether of the external evidence by which it is supported, the gospel bears witness to itself, and like the sun in the firmament, *it shines by its own light.* In proof of this, we need only refer to the interesting truths which have occupied our attention. They are so completely removed beyond the ordinary range of the human understanding; they are so sublime in their nature; and salutary in their effects as irresistibly to suggest the source whence they proceed. Christ furnishes a vast variety of motives to enforce the love and the practice of

godliness; but those derived from the death of the Redeemer may be considered as standing pre-eminent above the rest. They are in the strictest sense *peculiar* to the gospel, and thus distinguish it from every human system. They possess an influence singularly powerful over the strongest affections and practical principles of men. They come home with peculiar warmth and energy to the heart; and when once their image has been imprinted there, they retain their power and operate with a permanent influence. Infidelity and her ally Socinianism disavow such motives as these; and no marvel. The deluded and the deluding adherents of the wretched systems have their eyes shut against the light and glory of the holiness of Jehovah; and whatever tends to stamp the image of holiness on the heart, is to them unsightly and loathsome. The peculiar motives to a virtuous life which the gospel furnishes are by them either openly rejected or secretly undermined. They discern not their holy beauty; they feel not their animating touch; they recoil from their renovating and constraining influence. The design which the death of Jesus undertakes to accomplish, namely the renewal of man after the image of his Maker, finds no place in the catalogue of *their* desirable things; and they leave man as he is, the victim of ungodliness. It is the glory of the gospel that it carries along with it to the heart of every true recipient, a purifying efficacy; and "*the cross once seen is death to every sin.*" He that believeth hath the witness within himself; and he that doeth his will knows of the doctrine that it is of God. Shall we hesitate then to conclude that the gospel which furnishes such powerfully constraining motives, and which carries such a powerful *moral* influence along with it, must be "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation?" And shall we reject a system of truth marked by features of such excellence, and so admirably fitted to promote the moral improvement of mankind? No. Let us hold it fast in opposition to all the assaults

of open enemies or of concealed traitors. Let us bind it to our hearts as the pearl of great price. "We have not followed cunningly devised fables;" and therefore, with reason may we hold fast the profession of our faith, and contend earnestly for "the faith once delivered to the saints."

2. We learn the close relation between *principle* and *practice*.

There is not perhaps an error more dangerous in its tendency or more extensive in its injurious influence, than the supposition that the *faith* and *practice* of a Christian are not necessarily connected; to suppose that the discoveries of the gospel are addressed to the understanding only; that they are entirely speculative in their character, and designed merely to gratify the lovers of theoretical speculation; that the faith of the gospel is a matter entirely distinct from its morality, and that its privileges may be enjoyed while its moral precepts are contemned. What is this, but to oppose the whole Counsel of God, to divest the gospel of its peculiar glories, and to open the flood gates of licentiousness. The view we have taken of the death of Christ shews us, that there is the closest and most intimate connection between principle and practice. The truths relating to that grand event have all an obvious tendency to purify the heart and to control the life. "Jesus gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity." To acquiesce in the scheme of mediation by the death of Christ, is to acquiesce in the holy government of God which it was designed to glorify; to feel and acknowledge that we deserved to have been made sacrifices to Divine displeasure; and to comply with heaven's wise and holy plan for the sanctification and salvation of sinful men. In a word, to acquiesce in this, is to be of one heart with the Saviour of sinners, which, in other words, is to be filled with devotedness to God, and benevolence to men. And this is true, disinterested, enlarged virtue.

That there may be purely speculative truths belonging

to religion, as to any other department of human knowledge, is true; but it is no less true that all the great and substantial principles of the gospel are holy in *themselves*, and highly practical in their tendency. The gospel is no doubt a dispensation of grace, bringing salvation unto all men; but then it is no less true, that "the grace which it brings, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and every worldly lust." Guard then against cold and speculative conceptions of the gospel of Christ. Receive it into your hearts as well as into your understandings; and let it be your unceasing supplication at the throne of grace, that "God would enable you to adorn this doctrine."

It is of great importance to recollect that the connection between principle and practice is verified not less clearly and satisfactorily in the records of Christian experience, than in the written record of the system of Christianity itself. The thing is literally impossible that a man can really and truly receive the gospel of the grace of God, and yet continue in sin. Before such a monstrous idea as this can be realized, you must annihilate all the relations which obtain between the understanding and the heart; and you must change entirely the character of the Christian economy. We deny not that there are men who call themselves believers, and who are called believers by others, who, nevertheless, retain all the earthliness of temper, all the selfishness of affection, and all the practical indulgence in favourite sins, which distinguished them before their professed subjection to the gospel of Christ. But in all such instances as these there is no great difficulty in accounting for this melancholy exhibition of human inconsistency. We shall either find that it is not the real gospel at all that is embraced, or that the views entertained of it are exceedingly partial, or that the mind limits itself to a mere historical and theoretical conception of its principles, or that some carnal motive has led to the assumption of a name to live, while they are spiritually dead. The heart may be deceiving itself, or

deception may be practised on it by others. In either supposition the doctrines of the gospel are not suffered to exert their native influence on the character, and the blame which is so frequently attached to them by the men of this world, really belongs to their practical neglect, or their wanton abuse. Wherever the gospel comes in its spirituality and power, wherever its heavenly glories are seen by the eye of the mind, and its sweet consolations are really felt by the heart, *there* a great moral change will and must be effected; for if any man be in Christ, there will be a *new creation.* The man is admitted into a new world, and the pure and lovely objects which combine to form the scenery of that new world, exert on his mind an influence peculiarly their own. "Every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." Holy truth imprints its own image on the soul. The constraining influence of the love of Jesus is felt, and they who live under this influence, "live no longer to themselves." The language of Christian experience is precisely that of the Apostle, and it is strikingly illustrative of the transforming energy of the doctrine of the death of the redeemed:—"I am *crucified with Christ;* nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me, &c."

3. Lastly, we learn the singular obligations which are laid on Christians to cultivate personal godliness:—"What know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost." Hath Christ redeemed you by his death from the slavery of Satan, and yet will you refuse to be free? Hath Jesus purchased you by the price of his own blood, and shall you by your sins crucify unto yourselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame? Did Jesus die that he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and shall you tamely yield yourselves to his foul dominion? Did the Redeemer die that he might magnify the law, and will you venture deliberately and systematically to transgress that law? Did

he give himself for you, that he might redeem you from all iniquity, and yet will you refuse to follow that holiness? Do we desire motives to holiness which may sweetly move you along? We must imitate the Apostles of the Lamb, for they derive their noblest motives from the scenes of Calvary. "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. ii, 5–9. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world." "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord."

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. W. B. CLARK,

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THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY OVER DEATH.

(Preached on the occasion of the death of the late James Gibb, Esq., of Woodfield, Quebec.)

"*Oh death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" 1 COR. XV. 55—57.

IT is not perhaps very wonderful that the various forms of vegetable life, destitute of consciousness and feeling, as they are, should, after they have served the purposes for which they were created, wither and die. Neither is it very astonishing, that the various tribes of inferior animals should, generation after generation, die, and pass away from this earthly scene: for though they are possessed of feeling, and the power of

locomotion, and of a certain degree of intelligence, yet they are possessed of nothing that can be dignified with the name of thought, have no idea of God, no power of communicating, or at least of transmitting their experience, no sense of responsibility, and no gloomy forebodings about the future. But apart from revelation, the death of man is a great mystery. It is strange, indeed, that a being so exquisitely formed, with intellectual powers of so high an order ; capable of reasoning so profoundly with regard to his origin, his condition, his duty, his destiny ; and of comprehending so much with regard to the being, and perfections of his glorious creator ;—formed moreover with such a love of life, such a reluctance to die, and such earnest longings after immortality,—it is strange indeed, that such a being should sicken and die ; and *that* often when his mental powers have just attained their maturity, and the soul has been enriched with the treasures of experience and knowledge.

Apart from revelation this is a great mystery, and all the more, since science has been able to detect no flaw in the human system, which would necessarily lead to death, nothing which would unfit it for living on forever. Viewed in the light of nature this is a great mystery ; viewed in the light of revelation, it is a great sorrow. For there we find that death is the wages of sin,—the terrible punishment which God has inflicted on the race for violating His holy law, and rebelling against Him.

In discoursing from these words, I purpose to consider:

I. The subject of death itself.

II. What is meant by the sting of death.

III. The Christian's victory over death ; and

IV. The gratitude due to God for this victory.

I. It is a solemn and affecting spectacle, to stand by the bed of death, and witness the last struggle of expiring humanity. I have heard the heavy breathing stop at once, and felt that it was death. I have seen the awful change pass suddenly over the countenance like a cloud

over the sun of summer, and knew that the spirit had departed. But however closely you may watch, you can see nothing depart from the body. Sometimes the change is not at first apparent ; but generally it is at once unmistakeable, so that the scriptural description of God's work in death is, of all others, the most true and expressive :— "Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away." No doubt the immediate cause of what we call death is the destruction, by disease or accident, of some important organ of the body, or the gradual wearing out, and extinction of the vital powers. But this alone does not constitute death. It consists in a separation of the soul from the body, and is beautifully described in Scripture as a giving up of the ghost. And when Jairus's daughter was restored to life, it is said that "her spirit came again."

Look at the countenance, after death has taken place, and how awful and impressive the change! The shape of the features is there ; but the light and animation of the eye have gone ; the expression has left the face, and you feel that the intelligent principle has departed. The real man has gone away, and nothing but the material frame-work, in which the spirit resided, is left behind. Just compare the photograph of a living friend with that of his dead body, and the awful change is most impressively felt. It is not he ; it is but the poor image of his clay tabernacle.

It is indeed a great trial of faith to see the body, which some imagine to be all that they ever saw, of a friend, committed to the grave ; to know that it will become food for worms, and by-and-by be reduced to the dust, out of which it was originally taken. But it is a mistake to suppose that all we ever saw, is committed to the grave. Think of the animation, the fire, the living energy of your friend ;—the soul that looked out of his eye, and the expression that played about his lips, and say, are they committed to the grave? They are not in that dead body. They have departed, but they are not lost. You

did not see them depart, but that is no evidence that they did not go. You cannot see the electric current passing along the telegraphic wires; you cannot see the galvanic influence; and yet, from the effects produced, you see what tremendous powers they are. And it would be no more absurd to deny the existence of these powers, because you do not see them passing along, than to deny the separate existence and departure of the soul, because you do not see it leaving the body. God might, no doubt, annihilate the soul at the death of the body; but the death of the body affords no more evidence of the death of the soul than the taking down of a house affords evidence of the death of its occupant; and, even from the light of nature, we might conclude that it still existed in a different state.

But O how consoling to think that we are not left to the dark guesses of natural reason on this most important subject. From God's word we know that, whilst the body is committed to the grave, the spirit returns unto God who gave it; and, though it is in an incomplete state, so long as it is disembodied and exhibits, in its state of separation, an awful evidence of the evil of sin; still, even in that condition, because freed from every stain of sin, and every temptation to it, it is in a better and happier state than when united to a polluted body; hence Paul had a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; and says that for him to die would be gain; because, absent from the body, he would be present with the Lord. I speak here, of course, of the disembodied spirits of the Saints; and, regarding the state of others, I have nothing at present to say. Does any one ask me, where their residence is. To this I would reply that I am not careful to define the locality. I am certain they are with Christ; and, as "wherever the king is, there is the court," so, wherever Christ is, there is heaven. Does any one ask me who are the associates of our departed friends? To this I would answer,

they are the spirits of the just made perfect, and the angels, who are round about the throne. Does any one ask, if they are still cognizant of the affairs of this world? To this I answer, that, whether they have themselves any means of observing what takes place on earth, or no; associating, as they do, with holy angels, who have such rapid powers of communication, and with spirits continually arriving from this world; there is every reason to believe that they are kept fully informed of the state of affairs on earth. Does any one ask how they are employed? To this I would reply that some of them are employed on missions to this earth. Thus Moses and Elias appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. Again, when John fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, who showed him the future history of the Church, he said unto him, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets." Once more; the celestial messenger, who appeared to Daniel, and revealed to him the great chronological prophecy regarding the death of the Messiah, and the destruction of Jerusalem, is termed in Scripture a man,—"the man Gabriel." Others "follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth." And, "as they have washed their robes, and made them white in his blood; therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

II. I come now, as was proposed in the second place, to consider what we are to understand by the sting of death.

By a sting, we understand that weapon of an animal,

which, being poisoned itself, not only pierces the flesh, but introduces poison into the wound, and thus occasions severe pain. Hence by the sting of anything we understand that which renders it most formidable. And here we are told that the sting of death is sin; which just means that sin,—guilt and the consciousness of it—is that which renders death most appalling to man. We are further told that the strength of sin is the law; that is, that *that* which renders sin so appalling is the punishment threatened by the holy law of God, which we know that we have broken. That law being God's law must be enforced, and can never be violated with impunity. Hence, being conscious of having violated this law, and thus committed sin, we tremble at the prospect of death, because it introduces us into the presence of our Judge. Thus though it is a solemn thing to think that we must die, it is far more solemn to think that after death cometh the judgment. To most men there is something very appalling, even in the prospect of death itself. It is a violence done to the human constitution. Far from being the debt of nature, it is a violence done to nature, and the most terrible manifestation of God's indignation against sin. Hence the reluctance of men to die. Their nature revolts against it. It involves a breaking up of the tenderest ties,—an abandoning of all that is most dear and familiar to us here, and an entering upon a dark, unknown, and untried state of existence. Even the bodily suffering by which death is preceded, and accompanied, is sufficiently formidable. But to most men it is not this, that renders death so appalling. This is not its sting. The envenomed dart which pierces through the soul into the conscience, is a sense of sin,—a deep feeling of the terrible danger, arising from the guilt of violating the holy law of the Omnipotent, and inflexibly righteous God. It is the dread of death, as introducing us to the judgment seat of the God, whom we have so grievously offended, which constitutes its *sting*.

Many suppose that, as death is personified here, the

sting just denotes the weapon with which he inflicts the mortal blow; but as it was sin that introduced death into our world, it can hardly be said with propriety that sin is the instrument which death employs for inflicting the mortal blow. Sin is not the child and servant of death, but it is rather the parent and master of death. Death, it is true, is personified here, for it is addressed; but it is not represented as the destroyer of life, but as the extinction of life itself; and sin,—including the consciousness of guilt, is presented to us, as that which renders the prospect of death most terrible; and embitters, with the most gloomy apprehensions, and appalling horrors, the dying hours of all who have not found assured peace and rest in Jesus. It is perfectly true that sin is the cause of death; that, but for sin, there could have been no death; but the idea here is not that sin is the instrument with which death inflicts the fatal blow; but that the consciousness of guilt, the sense of sin, is the most bitter ingredient in the prospect of death—the envenomed sting by which the last enemy conveys the most corroding poison into the heart and conscience.

III. The Christian's victory over death.

For more than 4,000 years death had committed his ravages in this world, almost unchallenged, reigning supreme, and desolating the hearts and homes of the children of men. But Jesus compelled him, in some instances, to relinquish his prey; and, at last, personally got the victory over him. But even though vanquished, and thus shown to be not invincible, he still commits his ravages among men, and is still justly regarded as the king of terrors. But, though still terrible to all, to the believer he has been rendered less formidable. He has been deprived of his sting; for the Christian knows that his sin has been expiated by the blood of the Lamb, and that there is now no condemnation for him.

For nearly 6,000 years this world has been a land of graves—a valley of tears—a place of weepers. Go to the

remote parts of the country, and there in the clearances of the forest you may see, here and there, a lonely grave, or a small group of grassy mounds, surrounded by the rough paling which the hand of affection has raised, indicating that the pioneers of the wilderness, after their hard toils, are sleeping there. Go to the old world, hoary with years, strewed with the ruins of the past, and written all over with the records of human frailty, and there you will find the church-yard and the cemetery—those cities of the silent—crowded with graves, peopled by vastly more inhabitants than this world ever contained alive. For more than 4,000 years the grave's victory was almost complete; but, when Christ arose, its strong bars were forced open, and evidence was thus given that it was not impregnable. Since that time it has to the believer been shorn of its gloomiest terrors; for to Him it has been demonstrated to be but the bed on which death's sleepers repose; and now he knows assuredly that, on the glorious resurrection morning, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Well might the Apostle, in prospect of this glorious consummation, give vent to his feelings in the sublime language of the text, and well may the believer now take up the glorious anthem, and sing, "O death, where is thy sting?" &c.

A victory has already been obtained by Jesus over death and the grave; and, through Him, by His people also. He has triumphed personally over those hitherto invincible enemies of the human race, and gathered the first fruits of that complete conquest which will at last be obtained over them. Meanwhile, the Christian regards them as half-disarmed of their terrors, and permitted only to do that which will free him from the last stains of the taint of corruption, and introduce his emancipated spirit into the presence of his Lord. He can face them, therefore, without fear, knowing that it is only over his frail

body that they can obtain a temporary conquest; and that, from the very depths of this evil, God will shortly bring up good, and convert this loss into unspeakable gain, even in regard to the body. For that which is sown in corruption, will be raised in incorruption; that, which is sown a natural body, will be raised a spiritual body, beautified with immortality, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. It is in prospect of this complete victory that the Apostle raises the song of triumph in the text; and well may *we* take up the sublime strain and sing it in triumph because of Christ's personal victory already gained, because of the believer's victory over the fear of death already gained also, and in the full assurance of the *complete* victory which will ultimately be obtained when death and the grave shall be cast into the bottomless pit, and remembered only as defeated and forever-extinguished foes.

But *has* the Christian really obtained any sort of victory over death and the grave? Yes, he has *already* triumphed over the *fear* of them; and has learned to regard them not as absolute masters, but as subdued enemies, now converted into servants, permitted still to do God's strange work, but so restrained and directed, that the sufferings, which they inflict, are overruled for his benefit, so that death is now spoken of as his, in the inventory of the believer's property. "For all things are yours," it is said, "whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or *death*, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

IV. I come now, in the fourth place, to consider the gratitude due to God by the believer for this victory.

There has been a great victory gained by Christ *already* over death, which has secured the Christian's *present* victory over the *fear* of death, and the *final* victory, which he has in assured prospect, over death and the grave together. For both this present and prospective victory, it is to God that the Christian is indebted; and O how

fervent the gratitude, how deep and devoted the love, which we should cherish to our heavenly Father, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us, with all our heart, join the Apostle in his ascription of thanks unto God, for this unspeakable gift. And let us seek to stir up our gratitude and love to God, by thinking how undeserving we are of the least of his mercies, whilst yet he has conferred upon us the greatest. Let us think of the depth of the misery from which he has rescued us, the present deliverance which he has wrought out for us, and the prospect of future glory which he has opened up for us. Let us think of the price at which all this was accomplished, the humiliation, the sufferings and sacrificial death of the Son of God. And let the prayerful contemplation of all this fan the flame of gratitude and love, till it blaze forth in holy deeds of devotedness to God, and benevolence to man. Even the angels, who have no personal interest in the work of redemption, contemplate it with holy admiration and delight ; but oh, with how much deeper interest and adoring admiration and gratitude, should it be contemplated by us, whom it so intimately concerns. Bless the Lord, O our souls, and letall that is within us be stirred up to magnify, and to praise His great name ; to praise Him not only by the cordial expressions of our lips, but by the holy and devoted services of our future lives.

And now, dear brethren, you can see, at once, with what abundant consolation this subject is fraught to those who are mourning over the death of beloved friends when they have reason to believe that they have fallen asleep in Jesus. It is only over the body of the believer that death has obtained a temporary advantage. And soon that advantage he must resign. Meanwhile the spirits of those, whom you loved, are with the Lord ; in the enjoyment of a happiness infinitely superior to aught which they could have had with you. Their conflict with the last enemy is over; they have accomplished their warfare,

they have gotten the victory, and are at rest, and have entered upon their reward. Mourn not, therefore, for them, they are rather to be envied than deplored. You may indeed mourn over your own loss. Jesus does not forbid you to weep; but you are not to sorrow, as those who have no hope. Remember that *your* loss is *their* gain. And would you allow your own selfish feelings to grudge the departed their glorious inheritance; because they have left you, and you are not with them to share it. Patience, dear friends, your turn is coming too; and if you are in Christ, you too will overcome, and inherit all things; and be reunited to those whom you loved, in that blessed region, where there shall be no more sickness, and no more sorrow, and no more partings, and where God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes.

It is only, however to those who are in Christ, that we can hold out these hopes. Are there any here, who have mourned in bitterness of heart, over the departure of beloved friends, who, they have reason to believe, have gone to glory; whilst they feel that they are not themselves united to Christ by a living faith? O why do you delay striving and agonizing, till you are sure of an interest in Jesus! Remember that if you die out of Christ, these friends are lost to you forever, and the separation, which is now so painful, will be perpetual. But this is not the worst. Not only will you, in that case, be separated for ever, from those whom you loved so well, but you will be consigned to everlasting perdition, to the gnawing of the worm that dieth not, and the torments of the fire that cannot be quenched. O do not delay another hour. All experience convinces us of the uncertainty of life, and the madness of putting off the making sure of an object of such infinite importance, as our everlasting salvation. God warns us in His Word, that death may be sudden and unexpected; and with what awful solemnity has he lately impressed this upon us by His providence. It was but last Lord's day, that one of the most respected among

our number was worshipping with us, as you are to-day, and now he is engaged in the better service of the sanctuary above. I saw him bending forward, and listening with reverential attention, to the message of eternal life; and now, whilst his venerable form is sleeping in the dust of death, his emancipated spirit is, before the throne, no longer seeing divine things, as through a glass darkly, but now face to face, and needing no more the poor help of human expositors to comprehend the great truths which he loved to contemplate. I talked with him after divine service in the vestry : cheerful, calm and composed as usual he was then, and in an hour, he had obeyed the Master's summons to appear before him. Brethren, with what awful impressiveness does this solemn dispensation of providence ring, in our ears, our Saviour's words of warning—"Watch ye, therefore ; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all—watch."

I have not been in the habit of noticing particularly, from the pulpit, the death and character of the deceased members of my flock. I feel, however, from the prominent position which Mr. Gibb has long occupied in this church, and in the mercantile community of Quebec, that it would be unbecoming in me to allow such a man to pass away from amongst us, without some slight tribute to the memory of departed worth. This is not the place for flattery, if I could stoop to offer it. I did not court his favor while living ; and I will perform but a simple act of justice to his memory, when dead ; and I think I may say, without fear of contradiction, that our departed brother was a man of sterling principle, of unaffected simplicity of character, and genuine benevolence. Through the blessing of God upon his own well directed efforts, he raised himself to the distinguished position of respectability and influence, which he has long occupied

in this city. This was not the consequence of what men call accident, but the result of integrity, self-denial, and persevering industry. He had nothing more to depend upon than the ordinary run of young men, when he started in life, and for the encouragement of such, I would state it as my firm conviction, that there are few, who might not attain a similar position, if they would practice the same forethought, and economy, and self-denial, and industry, and be guided by the same upright and honourable principles, by which he was actuated.

It would be a poor thing, however, to contemplate our friend merely as having accumulated a fortune and attained a commanding position in this world, now that he has left it, and could carry none of his earthly possessions with him; but, whilst he was diligent in business, he was also a man of sincere and humble piety, living in the fear of the Lord, and endeavouring to serve him in his day and generation. It was no small thing for a man, in his position, at the period of the disruption of the Church of Scotland, to cast in his lot with that body of men who adhered to their principles, and not only *spoke* for them but *suffered* for them. I can easily conceive that even here, in these testifying times, there would be many a temptation to swerve from the right way and make a compromise between principle and expediency. Honour to the men now gradually passing away, who, in the day of trial, stood up in defence of the liberties of the Christian people and the spiritual independence of the Church of God, and nobly came forward to the support of the ministers, on whom the first brunt of the battle fell, and suffered us to want nothing that was really needful, or perhaps good for us.

In private life, Mr. Gibb was a very modest and unassuming man—one who chose rather to *do good deeds* than to make great professions. In his own family, he was loving and beloved; and, whilst he set all an example of integrity towards men, he set them also an example of

piety towards God. I do not represent him as a perfect man. No doubt he had his failings, and frailties, and shortcomings as well as others; but, taking him all in all, I am afraid we shall not soon see his like again. He has not lived in vain; he has been in many respects useful in his day and generation; he has so lived, that he will be missed; his death is felt to be a public loss. In him, to quote the language of one of his brother elders, our Church has lost one of its best friends, and Quebec one of its most upright, benevolent, and public-spirited citizens.

May those who are to succeed him be animated by the same high principle! May they set their father's example before them, and follow him, in as far as he followed Christ! Deeply conscious that the whole complexion of their future life may depend upon the course which they now adopt, it is my earnest prayer that they may be guided by the wisdom that cometh down from above. May they resolutely determine to be on the Lord's side, and to choose the good part which shall never be taken away from them,—to serve God, in the best of their days, and with the prime of their strength, and so to conduct themselves towards their fellow-men that, when they die, good men may make great lamentation over them.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

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NOW AND *THEN.*

"*Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*" I. COR. XIII. 12.

WE have here a contrast between the state of our knowledge at two different periods spoken of as *now* and *then*: now, the present; then, the future. To what point of the future does the apostle refer? We learn from v. 10: "when that which is perfect is come." The reference then is obviously to that period which we are in the habit of speaking of as the consummation of all things, when the present time of probation shall have run its course, and the ages of eternity shall have begun.

"Now," the apostle says, "we see through a glass darkly." The glass here spoken of is a looking-glass or

mirror. It is the same word which the apostle James uses when he says:—"If any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass," *i.e.* evidently, in a mirror. The mirrors of the time were made of polished metal, in which it is manifest that objects would appear even less distinct and clear than they do in our modern looking-glasses. The glass being a mirror, the word *through* would be better rendered *by means of*, a meaning which the original preposition bears quite as frequently as the other. Or if the local meaning *through* be retained, it must be understood according to the appearance which the reflected image presents to the spectator, who seems to see through the glass an object behind it. At all events the meaning is as if the words had been:—"We see as in a mirror."

The word *darkly*, you will observe, is replaced in the margin by the expression *in a riddle*. This being the literal translation and more definite in its meaning, we retain it:—"Now we see by a mirror in a riddle," or, to keep the very word of the original, "in enigma."

This is all we think it necessary to say on the mere phraseology of the passage; and, without further delay, we turn to the doctrine and its illustration. The text consists of two parts; but it is the same doctrine which is stated in each, though in a somewhat different form, in the first more metaphorically, in the second more literally; for a moment's reflection will show that the *seeing* of the first clause is not the seeing of the body, but of the soul, and, therefore, precisely the same as the knowledge of the second part. The one doctrine of the text then is this:—*The imperfection of our knowledge in the present life compared with its perfection in the life that awaits the people of God after the resurrection.* We propose to draw illustrations of this truth from the chief objects of knowledge, viz.:—Nature and Man, God and the Gospel.

I. The doctrine of the text is true of our knowledge of

nature. Even in respect to the literal seeing of the body there is a truth in it, which may serve, perhaps, as a shadow of the deeper reality. At first sight it would seem that we see nature face to face. But it is not so. Suppose you are standing on some eminence, and looking down on some lovely scene extended far and wide around you. You seem to see it face to face, to look upon it without any intervening medium. But if you could look into your eye just then, you would see the whole scene with all its varied lines of beauty photographed upon a little mirror there; and that, the photograph, is really what you see. You see hill and dale, and field, and wood, and stream, all reflected, and only reflected in the little mirror of the eye.

We see nature as in a riddle too. There are riddles everywhere. It is the object of science to unravel these. And its design has not been altogether unaccomplished. It has solved many a problem, and shed light on many a mystery. But it never yet has reached the bottom of any one of nature's great enigmas. After all it can do nothing better than harmonize the riddles with each other, or run them into one. For what can you say more of her very loftiest generalizations? Take for example one of the most wonderful of them all, the great law of gravitation, which explains so many difficulties, solves so many riddles. Is it not itself a great enigma? Science cannot tell who made the law, when or how it was enacted, how it is enforced, to what subtle influence it is due, or how long it shall stand unrepealed in the statute book of the universe. Science, no doubt, gives us insight into many things we could not have seen without it. By means of it we do see. But it is always "in a riddle" that we see, but darkly at the clearest.

It must be so, for we "know in part" only. We are checked on every hand by imperfection. Even this earth, which is our constant home, and has been the home of men for thousands of years—even it we know only in part; and what shall we say of that starry multitude of

worlds that glitters in our sight on the great concave mirror of the evening sky? There we see Arcturus and his sons; Mazzaroth, Orion and the Pleiades. But what do we know of them? Nothing but their names! Truly we "know in part;" and what we know is almost nothing.

Such, and so little, is our knowledge of nature "now." What shall it be "then"? We cannot tell. If we could, we should know it all already, and not in part merely. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be;" and so it doth not yet appear what we shall know. But this we know, that the knowledge we shall have then, shall be to the knowledge we have now, as the substance is to the shadow, as the face to the photograph, as the whole to the part. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the goodness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fountain of life; *in Thy light shall we see light.*"

II. The doctrine of our text is also true of our knowledge of man, of human life. How little do we know of human life. How imperfect is our knowledge even of ourselves, until we are enlightened by the Spirit of Him who "searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men." How much less then do we know, or can we know, of our fellow-men. Their life, their inner life, their only true life, is hidden from us, as it were, by a double veil—the dark medium of our own bodies and of theirs. All that we know of them is from observation, from external signs, visible and audible, which are only the images, as it were, of the thoughts and feelings of the heart; the shadows cast by the changing forms of the soul's experience. They are but dim at the best and inexpressive, and often they are deceitful; often they are the counterfeit, rather than the counterpart of that which is within. They profess to be the reflection of the reality within, but alas! how often are they used for a cloak and nothing else. It is only the shadows, and sometimes they are but painted

shadows, of human life that fall upon the mirror of our daily observation.

And do we not see it all too—the life of man—as in a riddle, enveloped in the folds of a great enigma, mysterious in its origin, mysterious in its continued existence, mysterious in its end, or that which seems to be its end! And is it not all shrouded—deeply, darkly shrouded in that enigma of all enigmas, the mystery of evil? Whence came evil? and how? and why? We cannot tell. It is all as "dark as Erebus." Ah, many an earnest soul is sadly exercised by the great problem of human suffering. That dark shadow falls everywhere, and sometimes it seems altogether to shut out the light. When we think of the multitudes of our fellow-men that are sunk in the abyss of degradation and misery, squalid and sick and poor, and destitute of comfort and of hope; and then think that these are all immortal spirits, endowed with noblest faculties, fitted for the service of Him who sits and rules in the Heaven of Heavens. . . . . What are they now? What shall they be hereafter? Who is there who does not sometimes put such questions as these, and find his heart sicken within him as he vainly tries to answer them. How stands the problem now? Philosophy has tried to solve it, but in vain. Philanthropy has attempted to dispel it, but it has not and cannot. Does the Bible solve it? Not altogether. It does in part. It resolves all suffering into sin; but this only shifts the difficulty, puts it farther back. For whence came sin? and how? and why? We cannot tell. The Bible does not tell us. Sin is already in the universe when the Eden narrative commences. And some are inclined to find fault with the Bible because it does not solve this problem. But most unwisely, most unreasonably. The Bible is not a book of theories. It is emphatically a *practical* book. It was not given for the sake of unfolding all the wonders of creation, and loosing us from the trammels imposed upon us by our limitation to a little circuit of space.

Neither was it given for the sake of unfolding all the mysteries of Providence, and freeing us from the fetters imposed upon us by our limitation to a little span of time. We were created finite in space, and are, therefore, necessarily unacquainted with many of the wonders of creation. We were created finite in time, and therefore necessarily we cannot understand the motion of that little portion of the great wheel of Providence which we can see. The Bible tells us we are finite, and leaves us so. It does reveal to us much of the past, and much of the future—all of both that is necessary to guide our present action; and for this we ought to be thankful. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may *do* all the words of this law." Why should we insist that all should be revealed? The Bible was sent, not for the sake of telling us how sin arose far back in the past; or why it was permitted then; or how it can continue to exist under the government of a holy God. Of what *use* would all this have been? Could it ever have dried a tear, or hushed one groan, or purged away a sin, or delivered a soul from death? The Bible came, not to explain the *origin* of sin, but to show us how to make an *end* of it; not to answer all the questions to which the sight of human suffering gives rise, but to tell us how we may be delivered from it; not to explain the laws that govern the winds and tempests of our life, but to point out "a hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest." And say, whether is it more suitable to our condition to have an elaborate exposition of the principles of the Divine government, or such an invitation as this from the lips of love, from the heart of God Himself:—"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest"? Surely it is no time to study the theory of the tides, when the floods have surrounded us, and are about to overwhelm us in their surges. It is no time to investigate the glacial theory, or any

theory, when the avalanche is swiftly descending on our heads, with all its terrible weight of impending ruin. No, it is time to flee, to find a refuge for ourselves, and for our families, and for our friends, and for our fellow-men. And such a refuge the Bible points out to us, and tells us to hide ourselves there, "until these sad calamities be wholly overpassed."

And *then*—what then? The enigma shall be cleared up then. "Now we see by a mirror in enigma; but then face to face. Now we know in part"—only in part. That is the reason of the difficulty. The dark cloud conceals the light. "Now men see not the bright light that is in the clouds, but the wind passeth by and cleanseth them. Fair weather cometh out of the north; with the Lord is terrible majesty. The Almighty—we cannot find Him out. He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice. . . . Men do therefore fear Him. He respecteth not any that are wise of heart." So said the simple Saint of Uz a long time ago, when the world was young. And what more can we say, now that sages have thought, and philosophers have taught, and philanthropists have laboured, and science and civilization have made such wondrous progress? Yes, thanks to the New Testament, with its fuller, clearer light, we can say a little more, we can speak of *then* as well as *now*. We can say:—"Now we see through a glass darkly, but *then face to face;* now I know in part, but *then shall I know even as also I am known.*" *Then*—when faith shall have merged in sight and hope in joy, when love full and perfect shall have come at last and banished fear and doubt, and difficulties and darkness—then shall our hearts, unburdened, sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, saying:—"Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art holy. . . . . For thy judgments are made manifest."

III. The doctrine of the text is true of our knowledge of God. God is a spirit, and we cannot see Him. He is infinitely holy, and we dared not look upon Him, even though we could. No man can look upon the face of God and live. How then was God to be revealed to man? It could only be by some reflecting medium, for we could not see Him face to face. The reflecting medium chosen was a human life. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" The man Christ Jesus was "the image of the Invisible God," "God manifest in the flesh." All the glorious perfections of Deity were reflected in His life. The rays of the Divine glory shone before the eyes of men, not in that full effulgence which would have scorched the weak beholder, but mellowed and prepared for man's feeble vision as seen in Him, who was "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person." How beautifully is this idea brought out by the apostle Paul in his second epistle to these same Corinthians:—"We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass (*i.e.* in a *mirror*, for the word is the same as in the text, and the mirror referred to is clearly the human life of Christ), the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Now, "no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, . . . He hath declared Him." "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him;" and, therefore, in our present state we see God as in a mirror—a lovely mirror, a perfect mirror, a true mirror, but still only a mirror—not yet "face to face."

And it is in enigma too that we see Him, the enigma of the Incarnation. O it is a blessed enigma, but enigma it is and must remain. But this is a riddle that need not perplex us. It is not like the dark mystery of sin and suffering, or the darker one still of future woe. It is a

glorious mystery, and ought to call forth our noblest strains of adoration, gratitude and love. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." We cannot tell *how* it is that God became man; but we can tell, and that surely, *that* it has been, and surely this is enough to fill our hearts with liveliest gratitude, adoring wonder, and heart thrilling love. It is only in a mirror and by an enigma that we see Him; nevertheless, we do *see*. "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." We do see even *now*; but not as we shall see *then*. Then the veils shall be removed—the veil of darkness and of sin from us, the veil of humiliation from Him, long since laid aside when He rose triumphant from the grave—and we shall see Him face to face. "We shall see Him as He is." And then we shall know Him, know Him as we do not now, "know Him even as also we are known." The word *as* must refer not to the degree, but to the manner. We cannot suppose that a time will ever come when we shall know God as *i.e.* up to the degree that He knows us, else we should have the finite comprehending the Infinite; but the passage does teach us that we shall know Him as *i.e.* in the manner that He knows us, viz., without a veil, without an intervening medium, without a mirror, without enigma, "face to face." For all "they that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb shall stand before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." "And they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

IV. The doctrine of the text is true also of the gospel of the grace of God in its application to the human race. The wondrous plan of redeeming love covers all the fields of time from Adam's fall to the final consummation. God,

the Infinite, Omniscient, Eternal, sees it all, sees it all at once, for to Him "a thousand years are as one day." But it is not so with us. Limited as we are to a narrow neck of time, we cannot see it all at once. Yet we can look upon its shadow. The Bible is a mirror on which the outlines of that scheme are traced by Him whose work it is. Just as the mirror of the eye is the medium by which we become acquainted with the distant and far extended in space, so is the mirror of the book the medium by which we become acquainted with the distant and far extended in time. The mirror of the eye is perfect. So is the Bible. But in neither do we see the object face to face, but only as it were in shadow.

And, therefore, we need not wonder that here too we should see it in enigma. As in nature and in life, so in the gospel, there are riddles everywhere. There are, for example, all the difficulties that are started by the question, *How?* How does God influence the minds of men? How does faith secure our pardon? How are we united to Christ? How are we transformed into his image? How are the dead raised? Such questions as these indeed need not trouble any reasonable man, for we can rarely tell how anything is done. You may get an answer which will put the question farther back; but you will always find an unanswerable "*How?*" at the bottom of all; and this last question always brings you to the power of God. And when we consider that He is all-powerful, no enigma need trouble us here. But there is one great enigma in which the whole scheme of redemption is enveloped, viz., its limitation to some, and some only of the human race. And here the Omnipotence of God, instead of furnishing the answer to the difficulty, is the very thing that creates it. For can we doubt that He *could* have embraced the whole human race in the scheme of redemption? Yet He has not done it; and why not? This brings us to the sovereignty of God—a sovereignty which gives no reason for its procedure; and,

therefore, we cannot answer the question otherwise than this :—"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Why should any one expect to be able to answer such a question? The decrees of God are His eternal purpose; and how can we, that are of yesterday, expect to understand them? And as (to speak after the manner of men, for language must halt on such a theme) the purpose is far away in the infinite past, so the final execution is far away in the infinite future. No wonder then that we, whose dwelling is the present, and the present only, should see it as in enigma. We know it only in part, and in our present state we can know it only in part. Still we know enough for our practical guidance. We know that the death of the Son of God is a sufficient atonement for all. We know that the offer of mercy is addressed to all without exception. We know that the Holy Spirit is promised to all who ask Him. We know that all who truly seek the Lord shall find Him. We know that him that cometh to the Saviour, He will in no wise cast out. Oh, it is a sad, sad thought, that many, very many, will not come, will not ask, will not listen to the offer of mercy. And it is a sadder thought still, that there are multitudes who never hear the joyful sound at all. That is the darkest part of the enigma, and it is vain to try to solve it now. It is not our part to explain the darkness, but to *carry the light*, and try to dispel it. And when our hearts, meanwhile, revert to the painful thought that thousands are dying every day that never heard of a Saviour's love, the only comfort we can take is this :—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" We must take it on trust now. But the time is coming when we shall see it and know it all. Now we see all darkly in enigma, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then shall we know even as we are known. And *then*—when the enemies of God shall have been finally scattered, when the redeemed of God shall have all been gathered round the throne, when the mirrors, in which now we see the

shadows of things, shall have been set aside as useless—then shall the enigma be resolved, and with full heart and voice we shall join that song of praise which shall make heaven's arches ring:—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." "Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

It now remains only to call attention to some of the practical inferences that ought to be drawn from the text. And,

1. It ought to teach us all *a lesson of humility*. How little do we know! How little can we know! Then how humble should we be! Are we puzzled with the problems of nature, the enigmas of life, the mysteries of grace? Then let us cheerfully admit it. No wonder that we should be, for we see nature, life, and the gospel, every one of them, by a mirror, and therefore indistinctly; we know them only in part, and therefore enigmatically. Then let us humbly own our ignorance, and seek wisdom from God, who alone knows the end from the beginning, and therefore is "the only Wise." And let it not be speculative wisdom, but *practical* wisdom—wisdom "profitable to direct," that we ask, for that is what we want most now. And the speculative will come in due time, not "now," perhaps, but certainly "then." Thus, "he that humbleth himself" now, "shall be exalted" then.

2. It ought to teach us *a lesson of trust*. Surely this is the natural result of the knowledge of our present imperfection. But how often (alas! for the deceitfulness of the human heart), is it quite the reverse. How often is it that men refuse to trust in God, because they cannot comprehend the mysteries of His being and person, or unravel the enigmas of His government. Why, if they could do so, they should have no need to trust, for they

should have all wisdom in themselves. But, seeing as we do only the shadows of things, catching only edges of truth, viewing only little fragments of the stupendous whole, how much need have we to commit ourselves unto Him, before whom "all things are naked and opened," and "with whom," and with whom alone in the last resort, "we have to do."

"I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness,—
Round our restlessness, His rest."

3. It ought to teach us *a lesson of gratitude.* Humility that we know so little, but gratitude that we know so much. For while we know what we do know as by a mirror and in a riddle, yet *we know enough for all practical purposes.*

We know all that is needed *for present action.* The way of salvation is plain and easy, so plain and easy that while it is often "hid from the wise and prudent," it is "revealed unto babes." To trust and to follow Christ, that is the whole matter. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

We know also all that is needed *for present comfort.* We have said much of human suffering, and we have seen how vain is the help of man against it. But in the gospel of the grace of God there is a sovereign balm for every sorrow. God is an ever present "help in time of trouble;" and, therefore, the true believer may dismiss every fear, and "possess his soul in patience," even when the heavy clouds of sorrow seem to gather darkest in his sky. Though we cannot explain the difficulties which encompass the subject of human suffering, this we do know that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." "Then why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope

in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Amid all the surgings of the sea of thought, amid all its storms and darkness, we may ever hold fast by these three anchors—faith, and hope, and love. And holding fast by these we shall weather any storm. Or, to vary the figure: in this labyrinth of life, Faith grasps the clue, Hope sees the light, and Love guides along the way, and strews the path with flowers.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. W. MACWILLIAM, M. A.,

BOMANTON.

"*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.*" 2 COR. iii. 5.

THE word in this verse, which is rendered to think, may be taken in a double sense. It may signify to think out, to reason out for oneself. It may also mean to reason with others so as to persuade them. Some scholars take it here in the one sense; some, in the other. Some suppose Paul's meaning to be, that he was not sufficient by his mere natural ability to think out or discover the truths of the Gospel which he preached. Others suppose his meaning to be, that he was not of himself sufficient to persuade others to believe and obey that gospel. The first class of interpreters say that we are here taught that there is need of a revelation from God in order to discover the plan of salvation; the second class, that, even after the way of salvation is

revealed to man, there is still need of a divine influence to accompany and follow the preaching of the gospel, ere a single one of those who hear it shall be convinced and converted thereby. It is hardly possible to assert, with confidence, that either one of these meanings, to the exclusion of the other, was the one here intended by the apostle. Had a person questioned him as to which he intended, we might easily suppose him to answer, that both statements were true, and that he had intended both. We propose, as far as our limits will admit, to consider the statement of Paul in reference to both of the matters referred to; and shall call attention, first, to the fact that man by his natural ability is not sufficient to reason out or discover the truths of the Gospel; and, second, that mere natural ability is not sufficient to convert the hearers of the Gospel and bring them into a state of salvation. In entering on the discussion we have, it will be seen, changed our terms from the particular to the general, from Paul to all mankind. Not Paul only, but all preachers—yea, all men—are not sufficient for these things. It will be granted that we are quite safe in the change effected. Among men there have appeared few, if any, possessed of an understanding more keen and powerful, or a gift of oratory more effective, than the great Apostle of the Gentiles; and we conclude that if any one could have discovered the plan of salvation and persuaded others to embrace it, Paul would have been sufficient for these things; and if he acknowledged himself insufficient for the task, and that his sufficiency was all of God, then the work must be beyond the compass of human ability.

I. Let us then, in the first place, consider our text as declaring that human ability is not sufficient to think out, to reason out the truths of the Gospel, or discover the way of salvation. It is a favourite theory with the opponents of Christianity in our day, that all that has hitherto been discovered or taught in religion is

quite within the limits of human accomplishment—that Moses and David, Isaiah and Paul, and possibly other men, perhaps even the speakers themselves, were, by their mere unaided ability, sufficient for the task of discovering and expounding every doctrine and duty contained in that which we call the Word of God. They assert that the writers of the Bible, though our greatest authorities in religious and moral science, did not need, and in fact did not receive, any miraculous or special revelation from God—that their inspiration differed not in kind, and not even largely in degree, from the inspiration which, by a poetical figure, we attribute to men of genius. If they are asked to account for the marvellous pre-eminence attained by the writers of the Bible above all others in the same department, they tell us they can easily explain this by analogous cases. They point to a man of science, richly endowed with natural gifts, with uncommon powers of observation, and reasoning, and generalisation, gathering before him all the facts that have hitherto been observed in a particular department. He pores over these facts, arranges them according to their similarities, their differences—he frames theories with respect to them—tests these theories—enters into long and abstruse calculations; and at length, as the reward of genius and labour, there looms up before his mind, at first dimly, and then more clearly, the vision of a mighty law of nature—a law that will embrace millions of particular facts in one grand rule —that will combine all the disjoined fragments into an undivided perfect whole—that will evolve order out of chaos, and weave the entangled and discordant notes into a beautiful and perfect harmony. *There* is the inspired man of science. Another man has widely observed and profoundly pondered all the known facts with regard to commerce, taxation, representation, government; and he discovers the great principles which form the foundation of Political Economy. So is it in other departments of knowledge; and thus, also, do the sceptics contend it.

was with the writers of Scripture. Being specially endowed and favoured for making discovery in the departments in which they were teachers, they attained, through native genius and diligence, to the knowledge of great religious principles, wide-embracing moral laws, which we still acknowledge as the profoundest, wisest, truest things that have yet been said in reference to religion. What Newton was to natural science—that, and nothing more, were they to religion—their sufficiency was human; and not at all, except in the most general sense, was it of God.

In opposition to this doctrine, which is frequently obtruded on our notice in these times, Paul and the other writers of Scripture assert that their sufficiency in reference to the truth they taught was wholly of God. Certainly the evidence of these writers themselves is immeasurably superior to the arguments or mere conjectures of other men—indeed the only evidence upon which our faith can surely rest. The authors of Scripture could not fail to know where they had learned their doctrine. It is incredible that they, the highest authorities in morality and religion, should be at the same time the blindest, falsest, the most immoral of men; that they should be deceived themselves, liars to their fellow men, blasphemers of God; and, if we are to receive their evidence, no candid reader can fail to acknowledge that they claim for themselves, in a sense entirely peculiar and different from what other men have enjoyed, that they had a revelation from God—"They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," what they declare to us in Scripture was, not the wisdom or invention of men, but the very truth of the living God; that they spoke "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Look again to the facts of history, and see if this claim of theirs is not abundantly confirmed. Turn to those who confessedly had no revelation from God; do we find that they, when equally favored with natural endowments, rose

to the same sublime discoveries as the authors of Scripture? We are in a position to put this fairly to the test. God in His providence seems to have designed it. In ancient Greece, if ever in the history of humanity, there was an opportunity for unaided natural ability to scale the utmost heights, and fathom the profoundest depths of religious and moral science. Those who know the state of civilization then, the condition of science and philosophy, the ardour of their great men in the pursuit of truth, and the splendour of their genius, acknowledge that the circumstances were the most propitious, the men the most gifted that could be desired. Human sufficiency reached the climax towards which it had been ascending for centuries in the persons of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. Well, did it by them, discover the doctrines of Scripture —the plan of salvation? The question scarcely needs an answer. Not only the doctrines of revelation remained hidden from them, but the very truths of natural religion were unknown, or only obscurely seen, and scarcely at all believed. They could not tell you with certainty whether there was but one God, or if there were Gods many, and Lords many. About the character of the Divine Being, where they were not wholly ignorant, they were grossly and fearfully mistaken. Of the immortality of the soul, that fundamental doctrine of all religion, they knew nothing for certain. He "whom, well inspired, the oracle pronounced, wisest of men" spoke of death as if it were a leap into the dark. "Now is it time for us to part. I, that I may die; you, that you may live; to which of us it shall be better is known to none but God." Even their systems of duty and morality, where you would think they would be least likely to err, were most defective and erroneous. To take but one instance, humility which we regard as one of the chief of the Christian graces was considered by them an attribute of the meanest and most cowardly of human souls; and they exalted into the foremost rank of the virtues that "magnanimity,"

that independence and self sufficiency of spirit, which we call pride, and which especially God abhorreth and resisteth.

So much for the knowledge they attained of natural religion. When we turn to what is peculiar to revelation, how much more does their insufficiency appear! The great question "how can man be just with God?" those who are not inspired never have answered—never can answer. When the conscience, roused from its lethargy, beholds with remorse its own guilt, with dismay the awful holiness of its judge, when it cries out in agony, "what must I do to be saved?" Who among men is able to furnish a satisfactory reply? And yet, human sufficiency has lifted up its brazen front, and proclaimed itself able to give the information. An English deist has assured us that mere unaided reason could have discovered the truths of natural religion, and can tell the sinner, if conscious of guilt, the way of salvation. He says that if we repent, the God, whose laws we have broken, will accept us on the ground of repentance. This seems to be the opinion of those who reject Scripture still. That if we are sorry for our wrong-doing, and try to reform our lives, we may look forward to the future without dismay, "tread the common road into the great darkness without any thought of fear, and with very much of hope." To which, it is enough to reply, that it is not true; and, if it were the truth, nature and reason teach the reverse. Break any law of nature, and mere repentance does not suffice to bring you clear of the consequences. Cast yourself into the ocean, and though you repent as soon as you touch the water, you are not thereby saved from drowning. Swallow a poison, and it mingles with your blood, no matter how prompt, how sincere, or entire, your repentance may have been. So it is with the mere laws of nature, as we call them; for which in themselves God cares, as it were, but little—which we could easily conceive to have been reversed or modified, had God so willed it. And are we to suppose that his moral laws—

transcripts from his own holy character—partaking of the eternity and unchangeableness and purity of his own essence and nature—are we to suppose that these are less dear in his sight, than the mere natural arrangements which he has stamped on the face of the material world? If mere repentance fails to secure impunity in the one case, shall we dare to argue from this that it will bring salvation and deliverance in the other?

We need not consider other methods of salvation that have been proposed by human reason than that already referred to. If time permitted, it would be easy to prove that every one fails satisfactorily to answer the question how can man be just with God? Even those which impose the heaviest tasks, and require the bitterest sacrifices, and exact the longest penance, fail to give peace to the guilty soul. The Hindoo mother, at the bidding of her religion, casts her child into the waters of the sacred river, yet the idol's face frowns down upon her with as grim and bloodthirsty expression as before she presented the costly offering. The heathen have given their first-born for their transgression, the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul; and yet their conscience was not appeased after all. When the soul is thoroughly filled with a sense of its sin, human ingenuity unassisted can devise no way for its removal. The murderess tells us that she can never get the red spot *out* from her blood-stained fingers, that "all the perfumes of Arabia will not suffice to sweeten her little hand."

Ere leaving this part of our discourse, it may be worth while to point out the true answer to the sceptic, as he pleads for the sufficiency of human reason in matters of religion. It is, that human reason can never rise to the region where the discovery so much needed is to be made. The cases quoted, as analogous to the inspired writers, are not so at all. Newton made the discovery of his principles and laws, because he dwelt in, and could explore, the region in which these laws were to be found in

operation. The astronomer can tell us of the laws which govern the heavenly bodies; because, with his instruments he can sweep the heavens, follow the planets in their courses, and weigh them in his balance. The geologist has discovered the fundamental laws of his science, because he can dig through the strata beneath the surface, and mark the order and characters which are registered there. So is it in all other departments, where human reason has attained to the discovery of great principles.

It is altogether different in religion, and as to the truths of the Christian Gospel. "How shall we escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin?" the law, the principle on which this is possible, is to be found, not on the surface of earth, not in the strata beneath, not among the stars of heaven, not in any land which the foot of man has visited, not in any country which his eye has beheld, or can explore. To answer that question we would need to enter the bosom of Him who is unsearchable, to fathom the mysterious counsels and purposes of Him whose ways are past finding out. To that question, the most momentous which man can utter, there must be eternal silence unless God himself reveal the reply to his creatures and shall himself speak out.

Shall not we bless our God that with Him our help was found? When there was no eye to pity, no hand to help, no voice to speak; a divine eye pitied, a voice from out the throne broke the silence;—yea, in his amazing goodness He anticipated the question, and promised a Saviour ere the sinner had entreated mercy, or begun to inquire if escape were possible. Shall we not bless God that, in his distinguishing grace, he has revealed the knowledge unto us? That by His word, in His gospel, we read and hear that He is, "in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing men's trespasses unto them"—that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, who was wounded for our transgressions, cleanseth from all sin"—that this Saviour has "obtained eternal redemption

for us"; and, by the various means of grace we enjoy in our Christian land, is pressing it on each individual for acceptance.

II. We may now take the words of our text as teaching, not only that man without a revelation is unable to discover the way of salvation, but that when any one, a preacher, *e. g.*, has, by divine teaching, learned that plan, and when in God's Providence he is permitted to declare it to others, his sufficiency is still of God. Without the divine help he remains unable to convey the truth to his hearers so as to secure their being converted and brought into a state of salvation.

In order to be convinced that it is a Divine influence, and not mere human ability that is the efficient cause in every case of true conversion, we have merely to look to the descriptions given in Scripture of the mighty change —the wonderful moral transformation—which then takes place. A very frequent account given of the change in conversion is, that it is a "new creation"; and the work of creation can only be accomplished by divine agency. Man can make new arrangements and dispositions of material already existing, but God only can create—bring a real existence out of nonentity, and "call things that be not as though they were." The sinner, before conversion, is represented again as "dead in trespasses and sins"; when converted, he becomes alive; and it is God only who is the author of life. His Spirit is the only quickener or life-giver. Human power and skill may check the progress of disease, retain for a little the feeble and expiring spark of life, and delay the approach of death; but, when the lamp of life has once been extinguished, man cannot bring the dead to life again; he "knows not where is that Promethean heat that can the light relume." God only is able to gather the scattered fragments of mortality, and lay again, upon the bleached and dry bones the living sinews, and bring up the flesh upon them, and cover them with skin and breathe upon

the slain that they may live. Before conversion, the sinner is blind; he sits in darkness and the shadow of death; man is powerless to effect the needed cure. God only is able "from the thick film to purge the visual ray, and on the sightless eyeballs pour the day." Man is not sufficient to make the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. God retains as his own these high prerogatives. All of these figures and others used to describe the change in conversion, testify that the excellency of the power must be of God;—that, though by man's instrumentality the work is done, the sufficiency is of God.

If we look again to actual cases of conversion recorded in Scripture, we find those employed in the work attributing their success to God. As invariably as the Apostles, when working miracles, wrought in the name, and by the power, of the Lord Jesus; so do we find them, as invariably, attributing their success in preaching to the accompanying power and gracious influence of the Holy Ghost. The hearts of the hearers were "opened by the Lord that they might attend to the things spoken" by the preacher. Paul, who laboured most abundantly and successfully of all, ascribes all his success to the "grace of God bestowed on him;" and the others also acknowledge their sufficiency was of God.

"I once said to myself," says Cecil, "what sort of a sermon must that have been, which Peter preached, when three thousand souls were at once converted? What sort of a sermon? It was such as other sermons. There is nothing to be found in it extraordinary. The effect was not produced by his eloquence, but by the mighty power of God present with his word."

And that which we find acknowledged by the preachers of the Bible has been verified thousands of times in later experience. Every successful minister of the New Testament can give, and rejoices to give, the same testimony; that, without the accompanying power and demonstration of the Spirit, his greatest efforts are unavailing;—like

beating with soft hands against a wall of adamant and brass, or shooting weak and pointless arrows against one clothed in impenetrable armour. The experiment has been repeated so often that not a doubt can remain. The preacher of the Gospel may be endowed with the richest gifts, with the rarest power. He may have the power to captivate the fancy, to gratify the taste, to fill the imagination. Give to him a profound acquaintance with the workings of the human heart, and an irresistible power over the fears, the hopes, the passions of men. Let the people feel, when under his influence, as an instrument under the hands of a skilful musician, who can touch any chord, and evolve any note he chooses, and move and govern it all at his own free will. Give to the preacher even the power to awaken and terrify the conscience, bringing it for the moment face to face with the solemnities of the eternal world,—let him be able to seize the sleeper by the arm and thunder in his ear, "What meanest thou? arise and call upon thy God;" and with all these various gifts and capabilities, without the sufficiency which is of God, not a sinner shall be converted, not a soul be saved.

Let such a one exercise his gifts in other subjects and he will speedily command success. In questions of science, philosophy, politics, he will carry the people before him with resistless power, and make a multitude of converts to his party and to his faith. But in the domain of religion, while he speaks of the things that concern the soul's peace, he, with all his gifts, without the aid of the Holy Ghost, is weak as any,—powerless to achieve the least spiritual result without that sufficiency which is of God.

In harmony with this doctrine we find, that it is not always the most eloquent preacher who is the means of conversion to the greatest number; not he, that has the most of human sufficiency, shall of necessity have also the most, or the brightest, jewels in his crown of rejoicing. God often chooses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and the base and despised things to

bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. Who that has read it can forget what we are told of Dr. Chalmers during his ministry in Glasgow? We can scarcely credit now the description given of his power as an orator over those who heard him. He certainly must have possessed a gift of eloquence, a power of swaying others, such as has never been surpassed, and perhaps only once or twice equalled in the history of men. We read, in his Life, of crowds withdrawn even from the business of the week-day, and pressed together almost to suffocation ;—of the eyes and faces riveted on the preacher and hanging on every word ;—of the heads all bent forward in eagerness, like the tree-tops under a heavy wind ;—of an awful stillness reigning in the church, while each one held his breath lest he should lose, or make his neighbor lose, one word, or tone, or accent ;—of the hurried gasp to catch their breath when the great enchanter paused for an instant at the end of a paragraph, or the conclusion of an argument ;—we read of an enthusiasm kindling into wild rapture, in which time and place and circumstance were all forgotten ; when tears started from every eye, and sobs and sighs rent many hearts ; nay, some give utterance to strange movements and loud tumultuous applause in the midst of divine service and in the house of the living God. Well, what do we read in the Life of this consummate orator, and he, too, an earnest, holy, prayerful, Christian man. We learn from him, too, the second lesson of our text, that the preacher's sufficiency to convert sinners is wholly of God. When Chalmers was in the very noonday splendor of his powers, in the zenith of his fame, when he had become that which Andrew Fuller foretold of him, "the king of Scotland," we are told that, on one occasion, a friend noticed him to be in deep dejection, and inquired whether he was suffering in health. "No," said he, "but much grieved in mind." Being further questioned as to the cause, he answered— "I must have mistaken the path of duty in coming to

your city. I am doing no good. God has not blessed, and is not blessing, my ministry here." And when that friend was able to tell of one sinner,—merely one,—saved under his ministry, "Ah," said he, "What blessed, what comforting news you give me. I was beginning to fail from an apprehension that I had acted contrary to the will of God in coming here." Of course the ministry of Chalmers was very fruitful of spiritual results. Perhaps, no one in these latter times has both directly and indirectly had a deeper influence on the Presbyterian church and the Christian world. Yet surely this is a striking thing to read, that, after some years of his wonderful labours in that city, so little of immediate visible result had appeared, that the story of one brought to the foot of the cross by his instrumentality should have delivered him from dejection and given comfort to his soul.

It would seem as if the power of convincing and converting sinners were a gift which it would be dangerous and fatal to bestow on man. Even the gift of eloquence, such as Chalmers, Whitfield and others received, is one that can safely be entrusted only to a very few. There is not, we believe, in life,—in the whole compass of human enjoyments,—a keener delight, a subtler, more intoxicating power possessed by any than by the successful orator. He who can overmaster, as it were by a spell, the minds of his fellow-men, who can touch at his will any of the chords that vibrate within the soul, who can evoke any feeling or passion that he may desire,—has a power which is safely lodged in the hands of only the chosen few. He shares, too, when exercising his gifts, a delirious rapture which is excessively dangerous to his own soul. He needs to be richly endowed with humility, as Chalmers was—to be sorely tried by persecution, as Whitfield was, —to keep him from that sin of pride by which the angels fell. The incense of praise which rises from applauding hearers has a perfume that is too keen and powerful for any but those of the steadiest nerves—the cup from which

the orator drinks is one that easily intoxicates any but the most sober brain. Add to all this glory and pride of eloquence the power of converting sinners ; and would not the people cry "it is the voice of a God and not of a man ?" Would not the person be sorely tempted to accept the tribute of their adoration, and, after having preached to others, become himself a castaway; the brightest luminary in the Christian firmament,—"a wandering star to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." God has shown not less of mercy to his servants than of divine wisdom in confining to himself the power of touching the springs of the will, of renewing the heart, converting the soul. God devised the plan of salvation ; God executed the plan; God has revealed it to man; and His power too it is that applies salvation to each new soul brought into subjection to the Lord Jesus.

It forms no part of our task, in discussing the text, to attempt an explanation of the Spirit's manner of approach to the heart, in producing the change of conversion. The work is mysterious—"The wind bloweth where it listeth, thou canst not tell whence it cometh, whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Yet a suggestion has been made of the following kind. God may have, and employ, an avenue of approach to the very centre of the soul, which man cannot pass along—nay, of which he does not know. There was a street in ancient Rome called the *sacra via*—the sacred way. May there not be a pathway into the heart of man from which ordinary traffic and common travellers are excluded, and which is opened only when the Divinity himself doth walk in solemn procession? There is, we are told, in St. James' Park, a triumphal arch, on which stands the colossal statue of Wellington, and beneath it a gateway, through which no carriage passes save the Queen's—along that highway none but the royal chariot-wheels roll. Thus God may show to the best of his servants their own inferiority and insufficiency. They bring their fellow-men to the entrance of

the street, to the gateway, and they can do no more,—save pray to Him that heareth prayer, that he would act, where they are powerless,—that he would undo the entrance, and take the convert by the hand, and lead him through the strait gate, and along the narrow way that leads to the Divine dwelling-place, and make him an heir of everlasting life.

Let us, ere concluding, gather some lessons from the doctrine of the text:—

And, first—may not preachers of the Gospel learn from it the necessity for diligence, and constant, close dependence on God and the help of His Spirit. There is need of diligence. The wind bloweth where it listeth, yet the sailor is not idle though he knows it is the only agent that can propel his vessel. He trims his ship, and spreads the sails to catch the favouring breeze. No one of mere men has left us a better example of diligence than he, who in the text acknowledges that all his sufficiency was of God.

Especially should we cultivate the feeling of dependence on God. The sufficiency is all of Him; the success all from Him. When we have our fellowship with Him,—when we are workers together with Him, and He working together with us,—we triumph over every enemy, and overcome every obstacle, save souls from death, and cover a multitude of sins. If by pride and self-sufficiency, if by personal unholiness and unspirituality, if by distrust and unbelief, we break the bond of union, sever the chain of dependence, we separate between ourselves and God; then no real good shall be done, no spiritual result can be achieved. Men's tastes may be pleased, their affection and admiration won, their respect and contributions gathered in; but their souls shall not be saved for all.

Is there not a lesson here, too, for Christian people? The preacher's sufficiency to discover the way of salvation, to teach it to others, is all of God; should not we learn, then, to give God all the glory? "Little children,"

said the aged Apostle, "keep yourselves from idols." Paul says of his brethren, "they glorified God in me." We, alas, are too ready to give the glory to the instrument and forget the true agent. Yet each right-minded preacher, after his greatest success, will be ready to use the christian expression of Oliver Cromwell, in concluding a despatch to the English Parliament, after one of his great victories: "It may be thought that some praises are due to those gallant men of whose valour so much mention is made. Their humble suit to you, and to all that have an interest in this blessing, is—that *in the remembrance of God's praises they be forgotten.*"

Finally, may not all learn from the text, the need of prayer to God for his blessing on a preached gospel. It is He that must do the work after all has been done that man can do. And how may we hope that He will do it for us? "For this he will be enquired of by the house of Israel." "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, give him no rest, till he establish, and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." When the people of the God all over the earth stir themselves up to the faithful discharge of this duty,—when the stream of prayer from one church shall issue forth to combine with those of all, then shall be formed a mighty river,—bearing on its bosom the aspirations of all believing hearts, the longings of all earnest souls,—which shall go forth to fertilize and make beautiful all the waste places of the earth, and the coming of the Lord shall be at hand. This doctrine then of human insufficiency furnishes us with a call to constant, fervent, believing prayer. And it is very beautiful to see how this doctrine, dear to our church, and to which she has always loved to bear her testimony, rolls off from itself the reproach that has been cast on it to us;—instead of making us idle, it calls to diligence;—instead of making us proud, it keeps us humble; instead of making us careless, it does, to use a saying of Chalmers, "make us pray all the harder."

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. DR. BURNS,

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"*Never man spake like this man.*" John vii, 46.

OUR text brings us to Jerusalem. The Feast of Tabernacles was being celebrated,—one of the three great festivals which drew crowds of pilgrims to the holy city. Jesus missed not the opportunity which such a great gathering furnished. Among the eager multitudes he is found, busily imparting instruction. "About the midst of the Feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught; and the Jews *marvelled.*" The Pharisees were annoyed at his popularity, and determined to arrest him. For this purpose they despatch a band of officers. It was the last day of the feast when they arrived. On that day it was customary for a procession to march to the Pool of Siloam. A golden pitcher was dipped into its softly flowing waters, and brought back brimful into the presence of the Lord. In that sacred presence that pitcher was emptied by the officiating priest.

The attendant choristers sang, "Therefore will we draw water with joy from the wells of salvation." Beholding this significant rite performed, Jesus takes advantage of it to direct attention to Himself, as the fountain of living waters, where alone the soul's burning thirst could be slaked. "In the last day—that great day of the feast—Jesus stood in the midst, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The rough, hardy soldiers, arriving at this juncture, are struck with that mild, dignified aspect, and singularly winning address. Meekness and majesty so blend in that look as to overawe them. There is such a power and pathos in that language as to melt and overpower them. They came to apprehend, but are themselves "apprehended of Christ Jesus." He who was to draw all men unto Him, and to whom the gathering of the people was to be, exerts on them a moral magnetism, throws over them a spell which they cannot resist. They forget their commission, or, at least, cannot think of fulfilling it; and, when they return to their employers, this is the explanation they give—"Never man spake like this man." Having, last Sabbath, directed your attention to the *matter* of Christ's teaching, we propose to-day, by the help of the Divine Spirit, to note a few features, marking the *manner* of that teaching.

I. Never man spake so *authoritatively* as this man. We are accustomed to pay deference to authority. Precedents have much weight attached to them. By the influence of great names, many are completely overborne. Having no mind of their own, they submit themselves to the teachings of others. This spirit was specially exemplified by those amongst whom Jesus lived and laboured. Though brought up in the bosom of such a circle, the mind of Jesus was cast in no such contracted mould. Conscious of inherent power, claiming an originality all his own, he struck out a path for himself. The sayings of the ancients he endorsed only in so far as they corres-

ponded with the right and the true. On many points He sets Himself up in opposition to those who were looked upon as infallible. "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time"—"But *I* say unto you—" "Verily, verily, *I* say unto you. This is *my* commandment. A NEW commandment *I* give, &c." How singular that one of the humblest inhabitants in the most worthless town of the rudest section of Palestine, should assume such a royal air! A poor Hebrew mechanic to set himself up in the face of the sages of antiquity! "I *say unto you.*" This feature struck his hearers most forcibly. "They were astonished at his doctrine, *for he taught them as one having authority.*" And yet there was no forwardness or presumption; no ostentatious display; no blasphemous usurpation of what did not rightfully belong to Him. This authoritative air marks His *promises* as well as His *precepts.* Though He became poor, and had not where to lay His head, he holds out royal honors to His faithful followers. He claims Heaven as His own, and thinks it no robbery to dispense its treasures. "I appoint unto you a kingdom." "I go to prepare a place for you." Even when dying the malefactor's death, He exercises the monarch's prerogative. He bestows gifts on men, even the rebellious also. The wretched criminal, hanging by a thread over the bottomless pit, whose closing eye pierced the veil,—that is to say, the flesh, rent by thorns, and nails, and spear, which hid the native glory of his illustrious associate,—was lifted from the cross to the crown by the mighty lever of that promise—"To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Wondrous display of majesty and mercy! If ever Satan was sure of a victim, certainly it was of him; but "Lord remember me" relaxed in a moment his iron hold; and, as the trembling suppliant is carried by angels through the rending Heavens, methinks I hear them ring with the exultant shout—"The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" This tone of authority marks his *prophecies*, too. In telling of

his coming sufferings, and the glory that was to follow; in detailing the judgments that overhung the holy city, with its splendid temple and doomed population; in picturing the rise and progress of His kingdom, and its ultimate universality, He speaks with the utmost confidence. Most unlikely, though all these results were, judging from appearances at the time, He speaks without the slightest hesitation as to their future occurrence. What authority, too, in connection with the performance of his *miracles*. He says, "Fill the water-pots." "The conscious water heard its lord, and blushed." He says, "Peace—be still." The hurricane is hushed, and the shattered bark is borne over a sea of glass to its desired haven. He says, "Lazarus, come forth;" and he who had said unto corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister, re-occupies his vacant seat in the family of Bethany. He says, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him;" and devils, even in Legions, are driven from the bodies they had tortured. He says, "I will: be thou clean;" and diseases the most deep-seated and desperate disappear. Those, who had worn the most woe-begone aspect, present neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. How differently are all these miracles wrought from those of His Apostles! Not one did they perform on their own responsibility. They were most particular in repudiating the very idea—"Why look ye on us?" &c. Their appeal is made to their Master—"In the name of Jesus of Nazareth." But Jesus, sensible that in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and that all power was given to Him, acts in his own name. And, when we behold the elements of nature changed and controlled, devils expelled, diseases flying away, and even death resign her ancient reign, and, vanquished, quit the field, and all at the simple utterance of His voice,—how can we forbear exclaiming, "Never man spake like this man." Look, finally, at some *detached utterances* and you will be constrained to acknowledge that He spake as one having

authority. "Thy sins are forgiven thee." What authority is THERE! "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power." What authority *there!* "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth." What authority is *there!* "The Son of man shall appear in his glory, and all His holy angels with Him, &c." What *authority is there!* Wonder, O Heavens! be astonished, O earth! His name is wonderful. Surely, "never man spake like this man."

II. This *authoritativeness* never savored of arrogance. He was "meek and lowly" in all his communications. Nor does any OBSCURITY attach to the language he employs. The wise men of the world too often use words which serve to conceal, rather than to convey, their meaning.

Never man spake with such *simplicity*, with such *ease*, with such *naturalness*, as this man. *Sublimity* we have seen marking his utterances, but *simplicity* no less conspicuously marked them. How simple are the *sites* he selected for teaching. Philosophers had their groves and schools, and porches, and halls—certain chosen spots to which they resorted. Jesus "went about doing good," "as he had opportunity." On hills and in valleys, in deserts and in gardens, in densely populated towns, and in the sparsely inhabited country regions, on rivers' banks, from fishing boats, in private houses, in synagogues, and in the temple,—he taught. There were no consecrated places in his eye. Pressed by his footsteps, every place became "holy ground." How simple was Jesus in the selection of the audiences he addressed. He did not limit his teaching to the learned, the rich, the refined. Sprung from the ranks of the people—emphatically the people's Christ, His ministrations were directed specially to them —though, when any of the high and the noble called on Him, or came in his way, he could adapt himself as readily to them. Whether a woman of Samaria or a mem-

ber of the Sanhedrim,—whether a single individual or small circle in a house, or enthusiastic thousands in the open air, He was ready for all. How unaffectedly simple His *style of address!* There is nothing labored, nothing intricate, nothing showy—nothing like straining after effect. Objects in nature and events in Providence are skilfully seized upon, and become tributary to his purpose. The fowls of the air, the fruits of the earth, the fish of the sea, the sheep, the goat, the hen, the sparrow, the mustard seed, the lilies, the grass, the vine—all have their lesson. A bloody massacre, or the falling of a tower, he will not let pass without a moral. He sees nets on the shore, and teaches from them "the art of man fishing." He sees a sower in the field, and speaks of the scattering the seed incorruptible, and the varieties of spiritual soil. He sees the waving grain, and speaks of the whitening harvests on the world's field, and the multitudes of laborers needed. He takes up a little child, and through him teaches humility. His parables (earthly stories with a heavenly meaning) are touchingly simple. They are taken from familiar scenes, and couched in the most easy, natural terms. We wonder not that children swelled His procession and chaunted his praises, and that the common people heard Him gladly. This simplicity never degenerated into silliness. Jesus was ever child-like,—never childish. In His easy, familiar mode of expression, there was never anything savouring of the mean, the low, the undignified. Most of the instances of authoritative utterance we have given, rise to the level of the true sublime.

III. Never man spake so *faithfully* and *fearlessly* as this man. He sowed beside all waters. He never missed a chance of doing good. He was faithful in things pertaining to God, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. Resting by Jacob's well, faint and hungry, he deals faithfully with the woman's conscience; he dissects skilfully her character, and presses on her acceptance a

water better than the well contained. Retiring into a wilderness for repose and refreshment, crowds follow Him. He cannot eat or sleep while they wait to be fed. "My meat (says He) is to do the will of Him that sent me." He rebukes them for the questionable motives which had influenced them in flocking to Him, and urges on them to labor for a bread better than that He had recently dispensed to them. He sought not to keep in with His friends and followers by humoring their caprices, or overlooking their errors. When they erred, he faithfully, sometimes sternly, rebuked them. "Get thee behind me, Satan." "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." "O fools, and slow of heart to believe." And, as for His foes, while he cherished no resentful feelings towards them, they were made repeatedly the objects of the most scathing and startling denunciations. He feared not the face of man. He seeks not the favor of the prince, nor dreads his frown. "Go tell that fox," says He, respecting Herod, when he sought to kill Him. Nor does He stoop to curry favor with the populace, though they tracked His footsteps and hung on his lips. He calls them "a sinful," "a perverse," "a wicked," "a rebellious," "an evil and an adulterous generation." Through those cities which had been the scene of His special public ministrations, pealed the thunder of His *woes*. None received such withering rebukes as the bigoted, self-righteous Pharisees. Their sacrificing the spirit to the form of godliness; their high-sounding pretensions; their disgusting conceit; their gross practical inconsistencies—He could not "away with." Simple and sincere Himself, the hollow-hearted hypocrite was loathsome to Him. He desired truth in the inward part. Not the Sadducees, with all their errors in principle, and looseness in practice, received such cutting rebukes as they—the long-faced, long-robed members of the straitest sect of the Jews' religion.

IV. Never man spake so *tenderly* as this man. Judg-

ment was His strange work. He retained not his anger forever. He delighted in mercy. That brow lowered with the cloud of portentous warning, but it oftener beamed with the radiance of heavenly charity. Those cheeks were occasionally reddened with the flush of holy indignation, but they were oftener wet with the tears of human sympathy. That serene countenance could array itself in a withering frown, but it loved more to wear the aspect of mild forbearance and melting concern. The Lord appeared in the thunder, the earthquake, and the fire; but "the still small voice" was His favorite symbol. It was written of Him—"He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall His voice be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." He says of Himself, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Grace was poured into His lips, and what "gracious words" proceeded out of them! How often was that saying of Solomon verified—"A word spoken in due season, how good is it!"

What touching tenderness in the invitation to little children: "Suffer," &c. The disciples rudely repel the anxious mothers, supposing their Master might be annoyed—that the presence of these innocent prattlers might prove an interruption; but the good Shepherd gathers the lambs in His arms. What tenderness in the invitations to the "weary and heavy laden"! "Come unto me; I will give you rest. Ye shall find rest unto your souls; my yoke is easy; my burden is light." "Come, for all things are now ready." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." He, whose voice was as the sound of many waters in withering rebuke and terrific denunciation, can make His doctrine drop as the rain, and His speech distil as the dew. How tenderly did He deal with the woman who was brought before Him, charged with heinous sin! "Go: and sin no more."

"In the sky, after tempest, as shineth the bow,
In the glance of the sunbeam, as melteth the snow,
He looked on that lost one, her sins were forgiven;
The lost one went forth in the beauty of Heaven!"

How tenderly did He deal with the blind, Bartimeus! The crowd tried to drown his voice, and block up his approach; but he caught the eye and touched the heart of Jesus. He had compassion on him, and said,—"Bring him hither to me." That vast procession must pause, and every other business be suspended, that He may beckon to and bless a beggar. Witness the notice he took of the widow of Nain, who mourned so bitterly as one mourneth for an only son; and the poor widow who cast her two mites into the treasury; of the woman who emptied over Him the alabaster box of precious ointment; and the woman who was a sinner, who washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.

Fierce howls the storm. Each rolling wave threatens to engulph the frail fishing boat. Above the roar of the billows and the blast rises that well known voice, which acts as oil at once to the spirits of the terrified mariners, and the surface of the swelling sea.—"It is I: be not afraid." How tenderly does He up-bind the bleeding hearts of His grief-stricken followers in the upper room! "A word spoken in due season, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." How full of such apples are those chapters in John which contain that matchless farewell address and intercessory prayer,—rich, refreshing, sweeter than honey, yea, than the honey-comb, to the taste. Witness the scene in Bethany, when the Man of Sorrows found vacant the place a loved one had filled, and clad in sack-cloth that dwelling of the righteous where was wont to be heard the melody of joy and praise. Over that couch hangs Mary, in speechless agony, while Martha, like the mother of Sisera, stands at the window and looks thro' the lattice, sighing—"Why is His chariot so long of coming?" Before reaching that house of mour-

ning, it seemed as if Jesus felt not—as if sympathy in Him was a spring shut up—a fountain sealed. But deep sunk within lay a channel, along which rushed silently a full tide of feeling; and, when the scene burst upon him in all its harrowing details, the floodgates were lifted, and there followed a gush which nothing could restrain. He weeps with those who weep. The sight of sorrow causes the fountains of the great deep within His sympathetic soul to be broken up. "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews weeping which came with her, He groaned in spirit and was troubled." "JESUS WEPT!"—shortest and sweetest of Scripture verses!—it opens a window into His very heart, and reveals a sympathy the truest and tenderest nestling there,—a sympathy, too, suited to the very temperaments of His people. Martha, a masculine, strong-minded woman, could bear to be talked with; and Jesus conversed with her at length on the sublime doctrine of the resurrection. Mary, a sensitive plant, the clinging tendrils of whose gentle spirit reached out to and clasped the "strong one on whom her help was laid"—needed a totally different treatment. She can hardly come out with the words which had doubtless often passed between the sisters, as their brother's life trembled in the balance, when she broke down; and Jesus breaks down, too. He gives Martha reasoning; He gives Mary tears. Jesus Christ is touched with the feeling of our infirmities still. In the adaptation of His sympathy to the constitutional peculiarities of His own, He is the "same yesterday, to-day, and forever." And, as He wept over suffering and sorrow, so He wept over *sin*. The thought of Jerusalem sinners made His heart bleed and His eyes fill. The festering corruption within, and the frowning curse overhead, He beheld and bewailed. For this His heart was faint; for these things His eyes were dim. "As He beheld the city, He wept over it." How agonizing are His lamentations!—"If thou hadst known even thou," &c. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," &c. And, when we think that without

Jerusalem's gates He endured the cross, and that the hands of Jerusalem's citizens were red with His blood, what tenderness glistens in that clause of the great commission!—"Beginning at Jerusalem." What forgetfulness of self! Though meeting from His followers treachery and cowardice, and left to tread the winepress alone, He loses sight of Himself in His solicitude on their behalf. Seized by the ruthless soldiers, He turns and says, "If ye seek me, let these go their way;" "He turns His hands on the little ones." When a few women, "faithful among the faithless only found," followed Him with streaming eyes and bursting hearts, He lets drop these words of tenderness, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me." And, when stretched upon the accursed tree, faint and bleeding, how inexpressibly tender were the words he uttered in behalf both of His dearest friends and most determined foes! His eye rested lovingly on His favorite disciple, and on Mary, His mother, who stood beneath the cross, realizing the truth of the angel's statement—"A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." "Mother, behold thy son; Son, behold thy mother." How touching, in such circumstances, the entrusting of that mother, in whose bosom He had lain, to the disciple who had leant upon His own! Nor do His infuriated enemies lie beyond the range of its sympathies. Their hellish imprecations are drowned in His fervent intercession—"Father, forgive them: they know not what they do." Surely, earth can furnish no parallel to this. Never man spake so tenderly as this man.

1. Study the *character* of *Christ*, as revealed in His life and lessons. How exquisitely balanced the traits that adorn it! Nor does this wondrous equipoise come out, of set purpose, and in regular form. It has to be gathered from a narrative the most simple, the most unimpassioned, the most unadorned. The beauties that emblazon it were deemed blemishes at the time of His appearing. The artists by whom this perfect picture is drawn seem artless-

ly unconscious of the master-piece they frame. Can this be a cunningly devised fable? To regard it as a fabrication would evince a credulity greater than to take it as what it professes to be—"a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation." This character has stood the test of time, and of ordeals the most searching. From bitterest foes of the Gospel it has extorted admiration. It is one of the foundations of our faith—repeatedly assailed, but never shaken. Admire, adore, imitate. Seek to have these features transferred to your character, and transfused into your life.

2. *Listen to the voice of Him* who spake as never man spake. It is written, "Whosoever shall not listen to the voice of this Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people." It is written again, "If they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn aside from Him who speaketh from Heaven." "Hear Him" is still the voice from the excellent glory. We listen to the words of man's wisdom. Act not the deaf adder to Him who spake as never man spake. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak." Be this your firm resolve. "He hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son." "Incline your ear, and come unto *Him*. *Hear, that your soul may live.*" Eagerly drink in the gracious words that proceed out of His mouth, in the spirit of the boy prophet, when he cried—"Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth." But be not hearers only; be *doers* also. As said His mother at the Cana marriage, so say we to-day: "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.* It may be difficult and discouraging, like the fishing in the broad glare of day, after the night of failure. "Nevertheless, *at thy word*, I will let down the net." On this DOING is pivoted our destiny. "If ye know these things, happy are ye, *if* YE DO THEM." The hearing His Word, and doing it, or doing it not, marks us out as either wise or foolish, and determines whether we be rearing our fabric on the sand, which will yield before the

shock of the coming storm, or, on the rock which, steadfast and immovable, will gloriously resist it.

3. Cultivate acquaintance with Christ. Go up through the wilderness, leaning trustfully on His arm, looking up confidingly in His face, and eagerly drinking in the utterances of His still, small voice. Like Cleopas and his comrade, on their Emmaus journey, your hearts will burn within you when Jesus talks with you by the way. Thus will you have your conversation in Heaven, from whence also you look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and where, not as now, "from behind a wall," or "through a glass darkly," but closeted closer than was Moses on the mount, and mirrowing a glory far more exceeding. "The Lord will speak unto you, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."

"I love to think of Heaven, its cloudless light,
Its tearless joys, its recognitions, and its fellowships,
Of love and joy unending. But when my mind anticipates
The sight of God incarnate, wearing on His hands,
And feet, and side, marks of the wounds
Which He, for me, on Calvary endured,
All Heaven beside is swallowed up in this,
And He, who was my hope of Heaven below,
Becomes the glory of my Heaven above."

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

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SINNERS AND THEIR SAVIOUR.

"*Christ Jesus came into the world to save Sinners.*" 1 Tim., i, 15.

THERE are few texts of Scripture better known or oftener quoted than this. It comes with the utmost readiness to the preacher's lips in confirming doctrine, in enforcing duty, and in beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God. It is often a very sword of the Spirit in the hands of the Christian missionary. The earnest Sabbath School teacher often avails himself of the keen edge of its perfect simplicity to pierce, if this may be, the triple mail of youthful thoughtlessness, insensibility, and hatred of what is truly good. Watchers by the sick and dying, on the other hand, know that it frequently lays aside this sword-like character, when it is no longer needed as a weapon, and becomes in the Spirit's hands a most blessed balm of

consolation. Many a time has it been as a burst of softest sunshine in hearts darkened and embittered by gloomy memories and vain regrets. Christian biography is rich in proofs that many a soul passes in peace to its account, because it is cheered and strengthened by this simple truth. Some of you may remember the mention made of it by a gifted girl whose life had been even singularly blameless and beautiful, and who was congratulated on the perfect peace which made her last hours bright with the unfading brightness of that land where they need no light of the sun. You may remember how, full of sweet trust and joyful resignation, she replied to those congratulations by saying, "O that peace! it all comes from my Saviour. 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;' and I just cling to him as if I had been a murderer." It is worth recalling too, how those few words ministered strength and peace to a great Christian philosopher, a man of keenest insight into the mysteries of God, and of mind so rich and high, that those who are themselves most justly admired, always admire him most; but whose closing days were deeply shadowed by remembrance of sin and anticipation of judgment. It is pleasant to reflect that the quoting of this text by a friend who stood by his bedside, soothed that dying man; and that he fell asleep, like a little child, with its calm and comfort in his heart. I have no doubt that to many a troubled soul these quiet words have proved a revelation of mercy; to the despairing, a dawn of hope—the first gentle gleam of the morning star ushering in a day of peace.

I have spoken of the text as a very simple one. It is indeed one of the very simplest of texts; but it is as profound as it is simple. You may sometimes have seen a pool whose waters were so crystal clear that you could not think it was far to the bottom; but you discovered, on trying, that they were of vast unmeasured depth! So these few words convey a truth so simple, and in so simple a manner, that even the young and the untaught may

understand it; but they contain also matter of devout and earnest study for the most mature, and that too in their highest and holiest moments. You would utter them to a child; yet the strength of manhood cannot exhaust their meaning. They furnish at once milk for babes, and strong meat for them that are of full age. The text is the Gospel in brief, and brings directly before us the two great subjects with which the Gospel is occupied, Sin and Salvation. It proclaims a most important truth—indeed, *the* most important respecting two parties whom it is the great purpose of the Gospel to bring together, the Sinner and the Saviour. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" and the very first step toward salvation is the attainment of a right and real knowledge of sin itself, of our own depraved and guilty state.

1. I shall therefore ask you *first* to consider that Sinful Condition of our race which makes salvation the great, urgent, universal necessity of men.

It may be that none of you deny, or even consciously doubt, that we are all "by nature the children of wrath." We have a witness within ourselves, testifying that we are fallen, dark, condemned, under sin, and exposed to eternal death. But it may be well for us to look at this truth very closely and attentively. For we must confess that ours is an age of weak and languid convictions in regard to the desert of sin and the danger of the sinner. The number in our day somewhat influenced, and even largely benefited by the Gospel, is very great—probably greater than ever before; and for this our most fervent thanks are due to Him who "will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." But the number of those who are filled and fired with love to Him who died for sinners, and with hatred and loathing of the sin which slew Him, there is much in the state of the Church to show that that number is not very great. And is not one reason of this to be found in the false and defective views regarding sin's demerit and doom which prevail so widely

even among those who have named the name of Christ? It is to be feared that we often fail to realize what we *ought* to mean when we are confessing ourselves to be sinners in God's sight. We fail to perceive the gravity of the evil, the danger of the disease; and so fail also to recognize the preciousness of the provided remedy. And this subject becomes intensely practical and is seen to be of the highest immediate importance, when we remember that there may be persons here who are neglecting the great salvation because they have never really understood the fearful meaning of the confession, "We are sinners."

It is hardly needful to say that the representations of Scripture on this subject are very strong, distinct, and terrible. Unpardoned and unrenewed man, according to these representations, is a prisoner, a slave, blind, naked, diseased, leprous, *dead*. If it should be objected that that these statements are largely figurative, it should be remembered that Scripture frequently, and without any figure declares men—all men—to be under sin, at once guilty and depraved. And it is not simply that they have committed many sinful acts; but that they are defiled, corrupt, "altogether become filthy," "all as an unclean thing,"—in God's sight, utterly polluted. "Whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and that the whole may become guilty before God."

The condition of sinners appears very dreadful even when it is contemplated only in this somewhat general way. But its dreadfulness becomes much more apparent and appalling, when it is examined minutely and in detail. And here I would *first* ask you to notice how the nature and magnitude of sin come into view, and the sinner's danger and doom stand awfully revealed, so soon as we remember that the sinner is one who, in madly unequal strife, *dares to oppose himself to the only living and true God, eternal, infinite, almighty*. Would that these truths were great living realities to us, that God is, that He is

omnipotent, that we have all deserved His wrath! It was this thought of God's greatness that enabled Job to see what it is to be a sinner. God challenges His creature to controversy, and by a series of questions, which might fitly be compared to thunder-peals, makes many tokens of infinite greatness, power and wisdom, pass before the patriarch's mind. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding." "Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" Such are specimens of the many questions which bring the high and awful dominion of God in its overwhelming reality before a human understanding. And what is the result? Job now *knows* himself to be a sinner. In sorrow and shame he cries, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." And again, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore, I abhor myself in dust and ashes." We read in the Gospel history of a signal manifestation, on one occasion, of the divine power of Christ; and the sense of that power and presence produces on daring Peter exactly the same effect as similar manifestations did on the humbled and chastened Job. It completely overpowers him; and, awed by the reflection that the mighty God is there, he exclaims, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." These cases are very instructive. They show us how man's condition as a sinner, weak and helpless, is revealed even to himself in the solemn and searching light of Jehovah's presence. "With God is terrible majesty." O my friends, it is against this terrible majesty that we have all rebelled. It is against the arm of infinite might that our sin has dared to lift itself up. Might not this thought lead us all to cry with awe-hushed heart and pleading prayer, "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out mine iniquities."

The exceeding sinfulness of sin and the unspeakable danger to which it exposes the sinner are shown to us

again with deep impressiveness, when we think of *the character* of that mighty God against whom it is committed. It is clearly a most perilous and presumptuous thing to sin against the Almighty; for that is to cast ourselves on the thick bosses of Jehovah's shield; and how easily, and at any moment, might that buckler descend and crush us. We might, at any moment, be taught by experience what it is to fall into the hands of the living God, with whom are dominion and fear. But does not our sin appear yet more base and vile—more exceeding sinful—when we know that it is committed against the truest, tenderest love, against absolute infinite justice, against awful unchangeable holiness? It then appears as an outrage and an indignity against a loving Father, as an affront to that Sacred Majesty of Justice that rules the moral universe, as a wanton discord seeking to disturb the harmony produced by those blended voices that rest not day nor night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." And does not our sin gather a yet blacker shade when we remember how good and pure that law is of which we have all been transgressors? When we think of ourselves as habitual breakers of that law which is so holy, just, and good—when we remember that by our sins we are wronging and affronting that glorious and exalted majesty of God, we must present yet another prayer, and cry, "Enter not into judgment with us. For in Thy sight shall no flesh living be justified."

A very remarkable light is cast on the sinner's state and danger by an examination of some of the *words employed in Scripture to describe sin.* For example, it is called by names that signify *unrest*, *toil*, *vanity*, *distortion.* I mention but a few out of many. And what awful ideas of sin, and of its inevitable punishment, are suggested by these words! They remind us that through sin, jarring and confusion have been introduced into the nature of man—that the golden chain which bound him to God in loyalty and happiness, and which was designed to be eter-

nal, has been snapped in twain—that sinful man is like the troubled unresting sea, like the chaff which the wind driveth away, like a wretched slave toiling for nothing. But more solemnly instructive than any of these is the word most commonly used in the New Testament to describe sin. That word signifies *missing the mark.* What an awful truth does the use of this word bring out respecting the sinner! He is one who misses the mark of duty. He misses the high mark of God's approval, and so comes short of his own true destiny. Created in the image of God, permitted to walk with God, designed and fitted to be God's happy child forevermore, he comes short of this shining mark! And not only does he miss this heavenly destiny, but if mercy does not interpose to save him—for though self-ruined, he cannot be self-saved—he falls into an abyss of eternal darkness and infinite distance from God.

But perhaps the most awful and vivid illustration of sin's foulness and the sinner's danger is furnished to us, when we see how *the sight of that foulness and the sense of that danger moved the holy nature of Him who came to save.* We behold Him in the garden completely overwhelmed, not by the dread of death—that were to place Him far below the level of many a weak disciple—but by what His pure soul was then compelled to see and feel of the burden of sin. With awe and reverence we watch His shrinking postrate form. We hear the falling blood-drops which proclaim pangs sorer far than those of death. We hear His sad supplicating moan in the garden, "Let this cup pass from me." We hear, and as we hear we feel that we can never forget, the piercing desolate cry from the Cross. We might wonder at all this, as utterly mysterious, did we not know that a perfectly holy being lies *under* sin and is dying for sin. He feels its touch. He sees its shame, its horror, its infinite misery. He saw what that cup contained which, but for Him, would have been commended to the lips of all sin-

ners. And the sight seemed for the moment to paralyse even His mighty energies, and to produce even in His stedfast soul, terror, agony, and a horror of great darkness. And with what dismay and self-loathing should we be filled if we could but truly see what it is to be a sinner? What horror would it inspire in us if we could but see that while we remain unpardoned sinners, we are under the wrath and curse of Him who, Himself "glorious in holiness" and "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," could not permit even the angels who sinned to remain in His holy heaven, but drove them into the everlasting fire prepared for them; if we could but understand that we are under the displeasure of that pure and awful God who has so often shown Himself to be a consuming fire against His guilty creatures here upon the earth; if we could but see that while we abide in a state of unforgiven sin, we are under the frown of that righteous King of Saints who did not spare even His own beloved Son the bitter pangs of the Garden and the Cross! O if no ransom had been found for us, it would have been simply despair and anguish to remember that we were sinners, and that our years of life were but as solemn and dreadful officers of justice conducting us to our doom. From those far depths we should hardly have been able even to cry, "Who shall deliver?" But a ransom *has* been found, a deliverer has come.

2. And we may now proceed, in the second place, to consider *how this great, urgent, universal necessity of the human race is met.* Christ Jesus came into the world to *save* sinners. Such a declaration might well make every child of Adam echo that grand prophetic strain:—"Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein."

For the accomplishment of this mightiest work which the universe shall ever see, preparations had long been making. For that coming of Christ Jesus the Church has

for many centuries been looking, longing, praying. For many ages prophets had, with growing fulness and clearness, continued to announce His approach; and though the voice of prophecy has long been silent, there is now among the nations a mysterious wide-spread expectation of the Coming One, like the waiting of nature for the budding spring. The world's spring is indeed close at hand. And here at last in the fulness of time He has come, the Saviour so often promised, so long expected, so ardently desired, so sorely needed. From highest heaven He has come, and from the throne of unapproachable brightness there, where He has been for ages worshipped of angels, and where from eternity he has been loved of the Father: to this dim and distant earth, to a town which is small among the thousands of Judah, and to the bosom of a lowly mother, He has come, and—O my soul, be still and hear it—He has come *to save sinners!* But though He came on that merciful, that matchless errand, there was no room for Him in the inn; there seemed no room tor Him in the world He had made, and which He came to redeem. He came to His own and His own received him not.

> *"Wrapt in His swaddling-bands,*
> *And in the manger laid;*
> *The Hope and Glory of all lands,*
> *Is come to the world's aid:*
> *No peaceful home upon His cradle smiled,*
> *Guests rudely went and came where slept the royal child."*

Rudely *they* went and came; but in tender and grateful reverence we gather around that rugged cradle. To us that name of Bethlehem is sacred forevermore; and we feel that the memory of the infant who was cradled there, casts over the lowly town a glory that can never fade. "Christ Jesus has come;" and we know that this is He whose goings forth have been of old; that the everlasting God of heaven and earth has become a child; that this infant of days is at the same time the ancient of days;

that this babe in the manger shall yet, as a man, hang for us upon the Cross ; and that in the humble birth of Jesus, and in all the other circumstances of privation and humiliation, the great life-sacrifice for sinners has begun.

It is begun ; and how is it to be carried on? In what direction are we to look for that work whereby He is to save sinners? I believe that it may be right and profitable for us to look *first* at His holy and perfect life. Not by His death of propitiation alone—although mainly by that death—but in part also by His more than thirty years of perfect obedience is our salvation accomplished. Was He not our representative and surety in His faithful and faultless service during His entire sojourn in this world, as really as in the mortal suffering which marked and compelled His departure from it. His death on the Cross was indeed "a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour ;" but was not His life also one long sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God? All men had failed in keeping the righteous law of their Maker. Many had shown graceful and amiable qualities, and some high souls in different lands and ages had so deeply impressed the thought of their goodness on the memory of mankind, that they remain, in their degree, the admiration, instruction, and reproof of after generations. But all had sinned and come short of the glory of God ; and all are, by an impartial inspection, concluded under sin. God looked from heaven to see if any were wise ; just as if He yearned for perfect excellence in the human creatures He had made. In Christ this yearning is perfectly satisfied. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Representing our race, He appeared in God's sight as the flower and crown, and perfect excellence of humanity ; so that even before the eye of Him who seeth not as man seeth, He was all fair—fairer than the children of men. There was no spot in him. Thus, you will perceive, the holy life of Jesus operates towards God with reference to the salvation of sinners.

But it has at the same time a direct action towards *man*, and that in many ways. It furnishes to Christians the loftiest example: as He was, so are we to be in the world. Do we wish to share His glory? Then are we to overcome as He also overcame. In a passage where the majesty and the misery of our Lord are wonderfully contrasted, we are exhorted to have in us the mind which was also in Him. Thus that lofty example rises ever before us, and acts as a perpetual inspiration urging us on to seek a full salvation. It acts as a ceaseless attraction drawing us away *from* sin. I say *from* sin, for though He came to save sinners, He does not save them *in* their sins. He came to bless us in turning us from our iniquities. Thus the life of Jesus, His holy childhood, His stainless youth, His sinless manhood, serve a high purpose in our salvation by forever calling upon us to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit."

I must ask you to notice here in passing how the meekness, patience, and gentleness of Jesus aid in our salvation by enabling us through the supply of His Holy Spirit to strive against impatience, self-will, fretfulness, murmuring, and the thousand enemies within us which strive to mar our own peace and the happiness of those around us. How many are there in every town of Christendom who take up the cross of duty, of suffering, or undeserved reproach, and bear it meekly because they see the shining track of the sinless unmurmuring Cross-bearer all the way before them!

But the earthly life of Jesus contributes to save sinners also by the impression which it makes even on those who have never come in true faith and repentance to that sacred side that was wounded for them. The picture of that life—of that weeper by the grave of Lazarus—of that weeper over doomed Jerusalem, notwithstanding her impenitence and pride—of that friend of the fallen and the forlorn—of that lover of little children—of that holy

guest in Simon's house, showing such grace to the poor outcast who came to Him there—of that Crucified Man who prayed for His murderers, who spoke those words to His mother from the Cross, and took care, even in the hour of His own supreme sorrow, that her widowhood should not be uncheered and uncomforted when He was gone—the picture of that lovely life hangs in the memory of almost all men in Christian countries. Even infidels cannot displace it from their own minds. That tender holy memory, like the sweetness of garden fragrance, pervades all the air of Christian lands. His very name is as ointment poured forth. And who may tell what influence that vision which all men have of the blameless and blessed life of Jesus, has exerted in softening, sweetening, and elevating society, in imparting an infinite attraction to the very thought of religion, and in bringing men nearer to the kingdom of God.

Were it not that there is still the baptism of death to be considered, and that, like our deliverer Himself, we are, as I trust, straitened till it be accomplished, I should like that we might here tarry and meditate on the influence which the *teaching* of Jesus has on the work of saving sinners. I must content myself with just saying that that teaching given with so much authority and yet with so much tenderness—so spiritual and yet dealing so much with every day life—so profound and yet so simple—so direct like the light of heaven, yet so mercifully forbearing like the instruction of a loving mother—revealing to us what God is and what we should be—moving men's hearts as no other words have ever done—that teaching, with all these wonderful qualities, remains the marvel of literature, and yet is loved and learned by the young and the poor. "The words that I speak unto you," says Jesus Himself, "they are *spirit* and they are *life*." Only the great day can reveal what that teaching has done in saving sinners.

But when we speak of Christ Jesus saving sinners,

Gethsemane with its mournful memories, and yet more, Calvary with its agony and shame, come almost inevitably before our view. "He Himself bore our sins on the accursed tree." We come now to the brink of a great mystery :—"High as heaven ; what canst thou do ? Deeper than hell ; what canst thou know ?" A mystery indeed ; a mighty mystery of mingled gloom and glory. For we are now to see that great teacher, that friend of man, that sinless one suffering, dying, and dying on a Cross. It was a death rarely inflicted except on persons of servile condition and the greatest crimes. It was a a death so painful, lingering and degrading, that the heart sickens and bleeds to think of it being inflicted on the basest and most abandoned of mankind. Yet this was the death to which Christ Jesus was subjected by the cruel thankless world which He came to save.

But it is not so much to the fact or to the awful manner of His death that we must look, as to the *cause* which made that death necessary and the purpose which it was intended to serve. The Sinless dies ; and why ? Many answers are returned. One says, in attestation of His love ; another, as our example ; a third explains that He came into collision with the pride, selfishness, and hypocrisy of men, and perished in the shock. In each of these replies there is much truth, but in none of them taken separately, nor in all of them viewed together, is there a full true answer to the question. Such an answer, one full and true, can be found only in oracles like these : "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." "He hath made Him to be *sin* for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." These statements, and many like these, scattered throughout the Scriptures, reveal to us the solemn grandeur of Christ's mission, and the fearful necessity there was that He should come into the world to save sinners. They clearly intimate to us

that man lies under a sentence of condemnation; that the Holy God sent His eternal Son to become truly man that He might be capable of taking man's place; that He came in the perfect willingness of a great and generous love; that He was made a curse for us, and by dying on Calvary bore our curse away; that the claims of right and law are fully met in the atonement of our bleeding surety; and that the just God can now justify the ungodly. Thus have we reached the great central act of our redemption. For four thousand years the mightiest crisis in the history of man has been approaching. It came on that morning of the crucifixion. It is over when the even has come. For there, in that fading light, we see the Ever-Blessed hang on the accursed tree, slain for our sins.

I have said that this was the great central act of our redemption. *On towards* this point all God's dispensations have been tending. *Out from* this one centre of sorrow and sacrifice shall flow influences of infinite power and endless duration over "a new world begun." Forward to that atoning death of Him that was to come, had all the saints of the ancient church to look. Backward to that Saviour, crucified for our sins, must all after ages turn. If it should be asked, how could that one sacrifice of one make many righteous? How could it justify the men and women, it may be of a thousand generations? The right answer suggests itself when we remember that John describes Christ Jesus as "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." He is the only begotten of the Father, and so is divine as the Father is divine. But He is born of an earthly mother, and so like her is human. He is in the bosom of the Father and is therefore God. But as a helpless infant, He also lay on the breast of Mary, and is therefore a man. He is human that he may suffer. He is divine, and so can impart an infinite value to all that as a man He did for men. He, who came into the world to save sinners, needed marvellous and matchless powers for His marvellous and match-

less task. He needed not only to be "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh," but also to be "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person." A divine-human Saviour dies; dies for sinners; dies bearing their sin.

Before passing from this hallowed ground where I trust we have been standing, as with unshod feet, in deepest reverence and love, I would invite you to look at two very solemn and touching aspects of this last and grandest work for sinners. They both relate to the feelings of our Lord, and are worthy of being held in grateful, sacred, everlasting remembrance. The first is connected with His holy hatred—His intolerable loathing of the sin He bore. *On* Him was laid an infinite burden of sin; though *in* Him even the searching gaze of the All-Seeing could discover none. It was not merely that He was constantly compelled to *behold* the pollution of sin around Him; although even that, to His holy eye, must have been unceasing torture. And it was not merely that He was brought into contact with it, suffered from it, and was torn and mangled by it. It was that sin, our sin, the sin of the race was upon Him. "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." And who may tell the grief, the pain, the shuddering horror which that loathsome presence must have forever inspired? His whole nature rose up against the evil thing; just as we should be filled with hatred and loathing at the mere thought, still more at the sight, and most of all at the sickening touch, of some hideous, stinging reptile. *That* fearful horror—it was such to Him—He bore for sinners.

The second thing I had in view is this: Jesus knows all, and realizes all the shame and agony of His death, long before it comes; yet, with a resolution that is born of unutterable love, presses forward to meet it. It hardly seems too much to say that the shadow of the Cross on which only His few last hours were spent, brooded over His whole life from its opening in poverty and danger to

its close in shame and agony. There is a well-known picture which represents Him, when a child, passing through a carpenter's shop, and being arrested by the sight of two small pieces of wood which have happened to fall cross-wise, one over the other. As He looks at them, we can read in His rapt, intent, expectant gaze that Calvary and its agonizing Cross have risen before Him. That simple artist-fancy brings vividly before one's mind that solemn vision of coming pain and death which I have no doubt abode with Jesus all His life. His references to His mournful end are frequent. He announces beforehand the place, the mode, the actors. He foresaw it all in its brimming fulness of pain and woe. And He practised no illusion upon Himself to make the bitter cup appear less bitter. He was always fully aware of its inexpressible pain and sadness. And from it all He could at any moment have delivered Himself. But onward He goes with unfaltering step; or, if His step does falter, He yet presses forward. On to the awful sacrifice He goes, that conscious, tender Lamb of God! O as we thus see Him advancing to meet His stupendous sorrow, and never turning aside; as we see that life-long crucifixion terminating in the bitter pangs of Calvary, and remember that He had come into the world for the very purpose of bearing all this that He might save sinners, how can we think of Him with other feelings than wonder, gratitude, and adoring love? "Expressive silence, muse His praise."

3. We shall now in the last place, and very briefly, look at what is secured for us by this mighty saving work of Christ Jesus. What are its results to sinners? These results may be summed up as involving a change of state and a change of character.

How wonderful is *that change of state* which the sinner experiences the very moment when, by an act of faith in Christ Jesus, he shares in this salvation! It is the greatest and most amazing change which earth knows. It is like that of a condemned criminal who is pardoned and

set at liberty. It is like that of a banished man who returns to his native land from a long and weary exile. It reminds us of that which Joseph underwent when he exchanged his foul and wretched dungeon for the splendour and abundance of a palace, his convict clothing for the vesture of fine linen, and his prison duties for the noblest functions and the highest place in the government of Egypt. It is like all these and yet it incomparably excels them all. For those on whom this change comes were once heirs of hell and are now heirs of heaven. Once they were the children of the wicked one. Now they are the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God." They are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Even now are they all the children of a king; and they are all destined to come to the throne at last. They are certain of advancement to the dignity of being kings and priests unto God. "Such honour have all His saints." They have the eternal God for their Father, the divine Son for their elder brother, and heaven for their everlasting home.

The other result of this salvation to the sinner is his *change of character*. If this change at first seem less extraordinary than the other it is yet a very signal one. A real revolution takes place in feeling and in inward habit, and often also a marked alteration in the outward life. Sharers in this salvation are renewed in the spirit of their minds; so that their sins shall be renounced, and if they themselves, in the sight of their fellow-men, have been pure, upright, and amiable before, these excellencies will all be strengthened, brightened, and placed on a new foundation, now that he who came into the world to save them rules over their hearts and lives. Light and darkness indeed may long continue mingled in their characters. Within their souls a contest, watched by spiritual spectators with the deepest interest, may go on for long with varying aspect; but notwithstanding many a sad-

dening omen of defeat, we know that the principle of good which lives within them will illustriously triumph when the weary strife is over. They are being prepared day by day for joining the happy company of the "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands," who are before the throne. And at last, through the spirit of holiness, Christ will be able to present them unto Himself "a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." How wonderfully transforming must that change be which fits us for such a company and for such a presence!

And the salvation which brings such blessings and which was purchased for us at a cost so fearful—can it be that any of you will reject it? O if you do, remember that "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." When the preacher thinks of this, how can he forbear, by the mercy of God and the love of Christ, by the soul's worth and its awful danger, by the suffering and the death of Christ, and by the eternal suffering which He died to save you from—how can he forbear, by all these considerations, entreating, beseeching, imploring you to flee from the wrath to come? With infinite love the Father is once again calling you, the Son inviting, the Spirit pleading. O turn not away in hardened indifference from those heavenly voices. Who knows how long they may address you? The very light of the Gospel shines for you now in the words of this simple text. But if you reject it, or simply neglect it, the sad distressful memory of salvation once close at hand, within your reach, and pressed upon you, will but serve to deepen the darkness of your eternal doom. And even *you* will feel it right that it should be so. For you will then know that you have travelled to perdition over the atoning blood of Christ Jesus who came into the world to save sinners.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. WILLIAM CAVEN,

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"*The Church of the living God—the pillar and ground of the truth.*" I. TIM., iii. 15.

THE apostle has been giving instructions to Timothy, "his own son in the faith," respecting matters of the very greatest importance to the Church, and to the government of his own conduct as an evangelist. The apostle had no reason to distrust Timothy's prudence any more than his zeal; yet was it proper that one, not only of much larger experience than he, but whose position and office required that he should exercise a general supervision of the churches which he had planted, should write to the young evangelist as the apostle here does.

There could be nothing of greater moment to the churches—nothing upon which, under God, the conversion of sinners, and the edification of believers more depended. than the finding of Office-bearers truly quali-

fied for their work. It was important, not only that the fold should be closed against "ravening wolves," but also that men wanting in any of those attainments or traits of character necessary to secure the esteem and love of their brethren, as well as the respect of the general community, should not be designated to office in the church.

The apostle describes at length those who were proper persons to be chosen and ordained as Bishops and Deacons. We need not, at present, rehearse the qualifications which the apostle requires; but he concludes this section of his epistle by saying that, although he hoped to visit Ephesus shortly and see Timothy, yet so important was it that the Evangelist should know how to "behave himself" in his sphere of duty, that he deemed it necessary to write to him without delay. For it was "*the house of God*" in which Timothy was occupied: he was not a teacher of philosophy in the schools—not the governor of a province—not the steward of Cæsar's palace: had Timothy held a position such as any of these now specified, though important, no doubt, that he should well discharge his duty therein, as a Christian man, yet the interests at stake would not have been so momentous. Nay, had Timothy been seated upon the imperial throne, his position and influence (so far, at least, as the immediate and material results of civil government are concerned) would not have had an importance so great as now; for he was a steward in "the house of God, which is the Church of the living God," and this church is "*the pillar and ground of the truth.*"

The apostle magnified his office—ever acted under the conviction that there was no description of service in which man could be employed, more intimately connected with the glory of God, and the well-being of the human race, than that which had been assigned to him, even the ministry of the word; and he would, as a proof, at once of his faithfulness and of his love, have Timothy penetrated with the same conviction. For this purpose it is

that the apostle characterizes the church as he here does. There is, indeed, another mode of reading the passage, which connects the last clause of the 15th verse with the 16th, and thus refers the expression "pillar and ground of the truth," to the doctrine of an incarnate Redeemer; believing, however, that the collocation of the clauses, in our own version, gives the proper sense, we shall not trouble you with refuting other interpretations, but shall proceed at once to the consideration of our text, as we find it before us.

1. We invite your attention, in the first place, to the question,—*What are we to understand by "the Church of the living God?"* The great importance of the affirmation here made, respecting the church, is a sufficient reason why this question should be carefully answered; and, if the proper answer is found, it will, doubtless, be valid for all times; for our own age, as for that of the apostles; for the past and present dispensations equally.

In the apostle's time the church was *externally one.* There were connected with it, both as ordinary members and as teachers, persons who denied some of the principal doctrines of the faith delivered to the saints; take as proof, the revelations made by the Epistles to the Corinthians and to the Galatians, and also by the Epistles of John; but there were no separate organizations of heretical or schismatical persons for some time after this; and certainly there was not witnessed what we behold in our own day—what our eyes have long been familiar with—many distinct and separate Communities of professing Christians, all holding, with more or less of fulness and clearness, the leading tenets of the Christian faith. This is at once the fruit of the blessed freedom which the Reformation has vindicated for us, and a testimony to the imperfect knowledge and imperfect charity which, alas, too much characterise the disciples of Christ to the present day.

These many religious bodies exist among us. Is "the

Church of the living God," then, some one of these? or does it embrace several of them? or does it include them all? Now truthfulness requires us to say—and charity does not forbid us to say—that there are Associations claiming the title of *churches*, which we cannot regard as, in any sense, of "the Church of the living God." No Society, we earnestly believe, which rejects the mediation and atoning death of the incarnate Son of God, can be part of the Church of God: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." Again, if the practical effect of any religious Association, so called, is to lead men away from God and salvation, we must never dream of granting its title to the appellation *Church*.

Here is a definition of the Church, familiar to many of us, and which seems clearly in accordance with Scripture. "The visible church, which is also Catholic, or universal, under the Gospel, consists of all those throughout the world, who profess the true religion, with their children." Now, amongst the multiplicity of religious Denominations around us, there are, no doubt, some which hold the truth more fully and clearly than others; but none of us would venture to say that "the true religion" is professed by no Communion, except that to which he has himself been led to give his adherence. In perfect fidelity to *all truth*, even as God shall have revealed it to us, may such a statement be made: for no one, surely, merits commendation for holding lightly by anything which he believes to be taught in the inspired word.

"The Church of the living God" must be more extensive, then, than any of the existing religious bodies. Whilst refusing to find place within it for those who deny the Saviour; who deny the power of godliness; who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness; who reject any of the great and primary truths necessarily involved in redemption, or teach men to live unholy lives; we are glad to recognize as of the Church of God, and to account, as Christian brethren, all who, in every place,

"confess with their mouths the Lord Jesus," whilst, as we may trust, "believing, in their heart, that God raised Him from the dead."

But we are acquainted with the distinction between the church as *visible* and the church as *invisible*. It is the visible Church we have spoken of: as to the invisible, hear, again, familiar words. "The Catholic, or universal, Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ, the head thereof, and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The visible church is founded upon *profession;* but this will not suffice for membership in the invisible. There must be that of which profession is made. No one can belong to the church invisible, unless "born of water and of the Spirit," "washed with the washing of regeneration," "renewed in the spirit of his mind," "turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." There must, through a living faith, be union to Him "who died for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." We must have accounted it "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." It cannot be too carefully remembered, nor too earnestly inculcated that, here, the state of the heart towards God and the Saviour, is all in all, and that mere profession is nothing. Freedom from vice is nothing; we must be "new creatures in Christ Jesus."

Even the visible Church includes but a portion of the human race; yet the "gate" by which it is entered is much "wider" than that by which we enter the invisible; and many there are upon whom the name of the Lord has been called, to whom He will say, at last, "I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity." There is a weightier reason than the exactness of theological science, why the distinction, to which we have been calling attention, should not be forgotten: faithfulness

to souls requires that the preacher should not forbear to proclaim and emphasize it in every possible way. If we, my hearers, have been taught of God—have seen the Son and believed upon Him—have exchanged the carnal mind, which is death, for the spiritual mind, which is life and peace, we belong to the church invisible; but, if faith and regeneration are strange to us, in vain are our names found in the communion-roll of the purest branch of Christ's Church upon earth.

But which is it, the visible or the invisible church, which is here spoken of, and called "the pillar and ground of the truth?" The question is easily answered. It was the *visible* church in which Timothy laboured, and in which bishops and deacons should be ordained. It was his conduct, not towards true believers only, but towards the entire body of professing Christians whom he was called to instruct and guide, that the apostle deemed so important. We doubt not that they who are the true "spouse and body of Christ," *might* properly be spoken of in the terms of our text; nay, that it is just because the visible church contains within it the invisible, that it may be described as in the passage before us: for assuredly did the church on earth consist of none but mere professors—of none possessing the strength and the stability of a true faith—it could never be "the pillar and ground of the truth." But such is not the fact; and, on the ground already indicated, we understand the apostle here to speak of the visible historical church—that church which is "the congregation of faithful men, in which the word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are required to the same."

2. We proceed, in the second place, to consider *what is meant by the Church's being "the pillar and ground of the truth," and in what ways she establishes her title to this honourable designation.* This is the main inquiry to which

the preceding, though important enough in itself, is, in the present case, merely introductory.

The church is here represented as holding up and sustaining the Truth; doing the same thing for the Truth as foundation, and pillars or columns do for a building. There can be no edifice of any shape or size—of any description of materials—without a Foundation. The palaces of kings, and the humble tenements of the poor, equally require a "ground" or foundation, and if the foundation is by any means destroyed, the building inevitably falls. Pillars and columns, again, of whatever order, are meant not only for ornament but use: they may exhibit the utmost beauty of proportion and finish, but they are also intended to give support to the edifice with which they are connected. The figure, then, evidently means that the Church of God sustains the Truth—God's own truth—in the world.

Here is Truth more important far than any which science has brought to light, or guaranteed us the possession of; truth not respecting the structure of the earth, nor the various tribes of plants and animals seen on the earth's surface, nor the constitution of society, nor the laws of commerce, nor the structure and laws of the human understanding; but Truth which teaches us, sinful and miserable creatures, how we may be restored to God's image, and regain immortal blessedness; teaches us what man's condition by nature is, and what God, by the gift of His Son, and the gift of His Holy Spirit, has done, and is doing, for our recovery; teaches us how we may so live as to please God and have fellowship with Him, and having glorified Him on earth, reach His presence where there is "fulness of joy for evermore." This truth, which is beyond all price—all comparison in value—it is the high honour and the high responsibility of the church to be appointed to uphold.

It is *the Church of the living God* which renders this service: not philosophy or science; not any association of

men disconnected with the church; but the church herself. Philosophy and science have their own province, and their own functions. They may, too, be of service to the Truth, if wisely directed. The church, if she rightly comprehends her own interest, does not look askance upon them, regarding them as necessarily enemies or rivals. They may usefully minister to the church, and contribute of their resources, to increase her wealth. Both directly and indirectly has this been done: science has demonstrated positions, and established facts which are valuable external evidences of the truth of the Bible; and many of the children of the church, trained in its methods, have been found well qualified both to expound and to defend the verities of Revelation.

But *in what way* does the church show herself to be the pillar and ground of the truth? In what sense may we affirm this of her?

If it be asked whether the church has *discovered the truth* for herself? we must answer by a decided negative. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Prophet of the church, and all she knows of the truth has been revealed to her by Him. In His own person, and by His servants whom He inspired, He has "brought life and immortality to light." None but He was competent to do this: "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him." The prophets and the apostles ever speak in the name of the Lord, and are solicitous to guard against the supposition that they revealed truth by their own wisdom, or wrought miracles by their own power. The opinion, therefore, that the church has *discovered* the truth, must be rejected, in every modification of it; nor less decidedly in the form in which it is often now expressed, that pious souls, everywhere, by their wants and yearnings and intuitions, have gradually brought themselves into the light.

Nor, again, does the statement of our text, respecting the Church, imply that she is, in any such sense, Custodian

of the truth, that God needs not, in His gracious providence, to watch over it, and, by His mighty power, preserve it from failing from the earth. It were worse than foolish to say that, by her own proper means and energies, the church is equal to this task, and that the covenanted faithfulness of God is not required for its protection. No; the light which God has been pleased to kindle would, long ago, have been extinguished;—extinguished by persecution, and infidelity, and heresy, and ungodliness, unless He, "whose eyes preserve the truth," had been its shelter.

But God very generally works by means, and the idea of the text is, that the Church is the *instrument* or *agency* that He has chosen to employ for the purpose of upholding His Truth in the world. He could have dispensed with human instrumentality altogether, in the matter of preserving, as of propagating His truth. He who "maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flaming fire," can never want instruments to accomplish His will. Or He could have employed human instrumentality of very different form; and He who makes "the wrath of man to praise Him," might, had He seen fit, have used the "congregation of evil doers," for maintaining and handing down his Truth. But it has not been so ordained; the Church is the instrument which He has chosen to employ —at least, *chiefly*, to employ—for guarding the most valuable treasure ever entrusted to any keeping.

It is unnecessary to say that, in assenting to all now claimed for the Church of God, we, to no extent, endorse the extravagant pretentions which ecclesiastical power has sometimes advanced. The church has no authority, except what her great Head has invested her with; she has no power or ability apart from the continued presence of His Spirit in her; and whenever she seeks to gain attention for *herself*, rather than for Christ and His living word, she ceases to be worthy of any honour.

Let us endeavour, then, to point out some of the ways

in which the "living God" is pleased to employ His "Church" in protecting and advancing His Truth among men—in which she is seen to be "the pillar and ground of the truth."

(1.) We may say *that the Statements and Definitions of truth put forth by the Church on many occasions*, are entitled to be mentioned, when we speak of the Church's instrumentality in upholding the truth. We are indebted to the Church in the course of her history—and especially in her early history, and in the period immediately following the Reformation—for many clear and admirable statements of fundamental scriptural truth, which will probably never be improved on. But the fuller discussion of this point might lead us into a train of remark scarcely suitable to the nature of the present discourse. Hence we proceed to observe:—

(2.) *That the Writings in vindication of the Truth*, by many of the church's most devoted children, in some measure prove her title to be "the pillar and ground of the truth." There has been, and there is pre-eminently at the present day, great activity among the partizans of unbelief and error, in propagating their opinions, and fortifying their positions. The Christian Faith had scarcely put forth its claims in the sight of the world, and invited the wearied nations to come and sit under its shadow, and eat its pleasant fruit, when infidelity was found in league with persecution for its destruction; and in this evil work there have been evinced a zeal and a perseverance, as well as an ingenuity and a learning, worthy of a better cause.

But neither has the truth of God wanted defenders, skilled in the use of their weapons. Whenever the Truth has been assailed by instruments of learning, it has been defended by the same instruments, generally with very marked success; and thus a mass of literature, in the form of Apologies and Evidences, has been accumulated, which, we cannot doubt, has been of essential service in

arresting the progress of scepticism and infidelity. The utility of the service thus rendered has been sometimes over estimated; but we need not, on the other hand, depreciate it unduly. Yet, in speaking of the literature which has emanated from the Christian church, we are bound to say that, while good has been done by learned and formal treatises in defence of the truth; so far as a really practical and effective vindication of it is concerned—so far as helping it to take root in the hearts and consciences of men is concerned, more good has been frequently accomplished by less pretentious Publications; it may be a simple exposition of the Gospel, by some one whose heart was glowing with faith and love, or a statement in biographical shape, as to how God was pleased to bring some poor sinner to himself, and how, through joy and sorrow, hope and fear, He trained him for the heavenly kingdom. We doubt not that more *understandings* have been satisfied, even as more *hearts* have been reached, by the "Call to the Unconverted," the "Pilgrim's Progress," the "Force of Truth," the "Anxious Inquirer," and other books of this kind which might be named, than by the many able and learned and ingenious Productions which have been called forth in reply to the unbelief of the last two centuries.

(3.) But, thirdly, the church becomes "the pillar and ground of the truth," *by the great Ordinance of public Preaching.*

How many voices are lifted up throughout the world, every Lord's day, in proclaiming the "unsearchable riches of Christ!" How many ambassadors of Christ stand forth, and, in His name, beseech men to be reconciled to God! Throughout protestant Christendom, not to speak of the regions beyond, there cannot be fewer than one hundred thousand tongues employed, with the express sanction of the Church, in the public preaching of the word: all with more or less of light, and very many with evangelical fulness and clearness, making known to men

the ways of God. With more or less of earnestness are men, everywhere, told of their condition by nature, as under the law and the curse; of the love of God the Father, in the gift of His dear Son; of the obedience and death of Him who came to save us, "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world;" of the work of the Spirit, who "convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come," "takes of the things which are Christ's, and shows them unto us;" "leads us into all truth;" and thus, by renewing, sanctifying, and comforting the people of God, prepares them for the heavenly Rest. This glorious remedial Scheme, revealed in the word of God, is thus brought and kept before the eye and the mind of the nations; together with the Precepts of holy obedience, which the Scriptures so unequivocally teach.

Can all this be in vain? Does all this serve no purpose, as regards the maintenance of the truth? No; this is that "foolishness of preaching," by which God "saves them who believe." Peter, on the day of Pentecost, proclaims repentance and the remission of sins, in the name of the Lord Jesus; the consequence is that about three thousand souls are added unto the church. Witness the success of Paul's preaching, not in a few places, merely, but almost wherever he went; insomuch, that thousands and thousands were converted and organized into Christian congregations under his ministry, and the face of the Roman Empire was changed.

The ministry of the Gospel has not, indeed, ordinarily been followed by equal results: if it had the world would have been converted long ago; but assuredly we may not say that the word of God, when faithfully preached now, has lost its power. Is it not true still, that, when the law is proclaimed, and the sins and impurities of heart and life are brought before the eye of the conscience, one and another is "convinced," "pricked to the heart," led to inquire "what must I do to be saved?" and that,

when Jesus Christ is "evidently set forth crucified among us," one and another is attracted to the cross, and is conscious in proportion to the strength of his faith, of deliverance from the burden and the terror of his sins? Consider, too, how many there are whose Understanding and Conscience are with the Truth, while the earnest living voice is in their ears; although, alas, the citadel of the Heart yields not, and the Saviour is not admitted. The power and the effect of Preaching, even in the present condition of the church, are great; and, O, how exceedingly these would be increased, were those who preach sustained, as they should be, by the earnest and unceasing prayer of the whole Christian brotherhood, as well as by a walk becoming the Gospel, on the part of those who profess to have received it.

In conjunction with the pulpit, and as parts almost of the same great Instrumentality, should be named the other sanctioned and approved modes of oral teaching; teaching in the Family, in the Sabbath-school, in the Bible-class; as well as teaching, whether by ministers of the Gospel or by others, from house to house.

While this instrumentality is faithfully employed; while preaching is earnest and evangelical, and the religious instruction of the young assiduously and prayerfully prosecuted, the truth will not fail from the earth, nor the "Church of the living God" cease to be its "pillar and ground."

(4.) Lastly, *by the holy and consistent lives of many of its members*, the Church of God is qualified to be "the pillar and ground of the Truth." There are professing Christians who are "epistles known and read of all men;" whose conversation is such that they, who are of "the contrary part, are ashamed, and have nothing to say of them;" who, while they "*adorn* the doctrine of God our Saviour," also *prove its truth*. It would be impossible to enumerate all those particulars of conduct and temper by which such Lives have told upon the world, and influ-

enced its convictions respecting the truth of the Gospel. Those who have led them have not professed to be faultless; nay, have continually confessed, with sorrow, their great imperfections; and yet there has been something about them which has carried the conviction *directly* to the mind of those who saw and took knowledge of them, that this doctrine—this Gospel—which had elevated, purified and sweetened these lives, must be true: for how can one help believing that "whatsoever maketh manifest is light?"

The lives of *all* professing Christians have not, alas, been such as described. Too many who have said Lord, Lord, have not done the things which the Lord commanded. The church visible, even in its purest times, has contained materials which will never enter into that glorious edifice which is being raised as an "habitation of God through the Spirit." We have to lament that the influence of holy and attractive lives has been neutralized to so large an extent, by lives of an opposite description (may God so purify His Church that it will soon be otherwise); yet who will say that no abiding and influential testimony to the truth of the Gospel, no *power* to impress the careless and the unbelieving, has gone forth from the holy lives of the true disciples of Christ? Those persons who have been so unfortunate as never to know professing Christians, who were true Christians, may be strongly tempted to doubt whether there is anything of reality in the Gospel; but if we should have witnessed the genuine piety of but *one* follower of the Saviour—especially if that one should have been near and dear to us—there will have been lodged in our heart a conviction in favour of the truth of religion, which no amount of hypocrisy and useless profession can ever entirely remove.

Thus, without attempting any complete enumeration, we have briefly called attention to some of the points of view from which the Church may be seen to be "the

pillar and ground of the truth." In regard to some of the matters spoken of, the Church has been considered as acting in her organized capacity; in regard to others, the reference has been rather to the work and influence of her individual members. The Head of the church credits her, however, with all the testimony borne by her children, and with all the good done by them; and He never contemplates the case of disciples of His, to whom it is permitted to live in fellowship with their brethren, but who shall prefer to live and act in a purely isolated capacity.

We remark, in concluding our subject: *First*, that we should regard the Church of God with a degree of interest and affection, such as we accord to no other Society or Institution. She is "the pillar and ground of the truth;" —that precious truth concerning God in Christ, which has brought rest to so many wearied souls, and will continue to do so till the end; which has given birth to all that has been earnest, or pure, or elevated, or glad in the lives of God's children here upon earth, and by the complete triumph of which "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ." Shall we not, therefore, say with the psalmist, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy?"

Second. We should sustain, with all our available resources and energies, the Church of God—this blessed cause of the Redeemer, upon earth. God has indeed founded His Church upon a rock. *He* will watch over and protect her. His promise is that "no weapon formed against Zion shall prosper, and that every tongue lifted in judgment against her shall be condemned;" yet He calls upon us to become fellow-workers with Him in maintaining, as in extending, His truth.

We must first give *ourselves* to the Lord; and then we

must keep back nothing that He has bestowed upon us, and that He has rendered it possible for us to give. Our property, our mental endowments, our attainments in knowledge, our physical energy, our social influence, all we have, must be freely offered to the Lord. O, it is most gracious of Him to permit us thus to serve Him, and to accept of any poor returns for His infinite bounty, that he enables us to make. "O Lord, truly I am thy servant. I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds."

Thirdly. In all our zeal for the maintenance of the truth, and for the extension of the Church's influence, let us not forget the distinction pointed out between the *visible society* of those who profess the true religion, and "*the church of the first born written in Heaven;*" nor let us fail to ask the momentous question, shall we, whose title to membership in the church below has been recognized by the guardians of her fellowship, be able to stand the scrutiny of That Day? There is, indeed, something greatly wrong if we desire not the communion of Christ's professing disciples; but, O, is it better with us, if we "have a name to live and are dead?" May we all have Life in the living Son of God.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. JAMES CAMERON,

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WEAKNESS RISING INTO STRENGTH.

"*And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries, but the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.*—DAN. XI., 32.

THE Jewish war with Antiochus, King of Syria, which Daniel foretells, in this chapter, and to which Paul refers, in closing his "cloud of witnesses," though less famous, is not less glorious, than the best of those wars in which a few brave men have successfully upheld religion, and liberty against overpowering might. A handful of poor, depressed people, "out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Heb. xi., 34. Wherein lay the secret of their great strength? That is a question of personal interest to every one of us who, willing or unwilling, must take sides, in one way or another, in the conflict between Christ and anti-christ, of which this last

conflict, under the old dispensation, is, in some respects, a type. "*The people that do know their God shall be strong.*"

What is that knowledge of God that makes men strong? In what way does the true knowledge of God impart to men strength? What light do these truths shed on our position, and duties, as soldiers of Christ? To these three questions let me endeavour, depending on Divine help, to give short, simple, and scriptural answers, hoping our enquiry will be, not to satisfy curiosity, but to fit us more for earnest and patient contest.

I. *That knowledge of God which makes men strong—What is it, and whence does it come?*

There is a knowledge of God that makes strong men weak, yea, even turns brave men into cowards. Such knowledge had Adam when he hid himself from God among the trees of the garden. Such knowledge had the slothful servant, who said:—"I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth." But, again, there is a knowledge of God that makes the weak strong, and makes of cowards brave men. True knowledge of God, by which men become, "*strong and do exploits*, is distinguished by the following marks:—

It comes through a *new spiritual sense.* Sin, it is true, has not destroyed in men the faculties by which they know God, but it has so contracted and distorted their exercise, that the power of seeing, and knowing God aright, has been virtually lost. "O, foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes and see not; which have ears and hear not." Jer. v. 21. The natural man knows God as the owl knows light, or as the blind man knows the beauty and brightness of the sun. Ere man can know God, therefore, the eyes of his understanding must be opened, and he must thus receive, what may be called, a new sense, or a new power of vision. Hence, the work of the Spirit of God, in conversion is, often in Scripture, compared to giving eyes to the blind, and ears to the deaf; nay, more—the giving of this new sense, with its blessed effects on

all the power of the soul, is compared to a "new creation," "a raising of the dead."

It is *after a correct fashion.* The Pharisees knew our Lord after a fashion. It was not, however, only in degree, but in very essence that Peter's knowledge of Christ differed from theirs, when he said: "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." It is true, that the believer acquainting himself with God, is like the child, mentioned by Augustine, who said that he was going to empty the sea into a hole he had dug in the sand. But the drop of water in the little pool was true, sweet-smelling sea-water, and not base, brackish stuff; so, the believer's knowledge of God is, as far as it goes, good, and, as far as heaven is above the earth, is it above that carnal knowledge of God which thinks God "altogether like man," Psalm l. 21, or which says, "That the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." Zeph. i. 12.

It is *from above.* Knowledge, like water, never rises higher than its source: and it is an ambition as mad as the ambition of Babel,—to think that fallen men can rise to heavenly knowledge by a tower built of materials purely of this earth. For man, it is possible to rise to God, not by a tower raised on earth, but only by a ladder, like Jacob's, sent *down from* heaven. The knowledge that is born of the flesh is flesh: it is only the knowledge that is born of the Spirit that is spiritual, and that can reach to God. He began, therefore, at the proper place, who prayed, "Give me a *heart* to desire thee, desiring to seek thee, seeking to find thee, finding to love thee, and loving no more to offend thee." That eminent Saint fixes the first link of this golden chain of Divine knowledge, exactly where the Word of God fixes it:—"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." II Cor. iv. 6. This knowledge, therefore, in its essence, is not from man, nor by man, nor is it by "ethical development" and self-cul-

ture; but it is a power, and a light that moves from above towards men, and rises over those sitting in the region and shadow of death, as the sun rises on men chasing away darkness.

It has in it a *transforming power.* The Hebrew word translated "*know*," includes the action of knowing, both as commencing and completed; it includes the two-fold idea of seeing a thing, and delighting in it; it embraces in one word what we usually employ two words to express,—to *see* and to *taste.*

"The way to know were not to see but taste."

The knowledge of God, here referred to, is therefore, the outgoing of the whole man towards God, as the soul's chief end and highest good. This is the very word employed by Jeremiah to express the full faith and assurance of gospel times. "For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will give them an heart to *know* me that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Jer. xxiv, 7. Such knowledge as this must, therefore, gradually fuse and mould the mind, heart, life, and character into the very image of Him, on whom the soul rests, and in whom the heart delights. So Paul teaches, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." II Cor. iii, 18.

It has a *self-evidencing certainty.* Faith is a higher faculty than reason: this, therefore, is a surer knowledge than the perceptions of natural light, or than the conclusions of reason; "it is," as Origen says, "more divine than any demonstration:" because it is a revelation, from a true God, through His infallible word, by His Holy Spirit, to a "new creation" in man, which answereth therefore to God's voice, as sheep to the voice of their shepherd; "for they know his voice." Hence the solid ground, which we see to be ever beneath the

feet of the Saints of God ; hence their clear and decided utterances, on all the great questions of this life and the next ; both things always in such great and glad contrast to the faltering steps, and the timid and doubting utterances of the wise men of this world. While one great philosopher mourns that, "the faster he followed truth, the further it fled from him," and another calls the Providence of God, "a bundle of contradictions," and a third says of death, that it is a "leap in the dark," Peter, a fisherman of Galilee, who was considered by the scholars of his day "an unlearned and ignorant man," settles all these doubts by his triumphant assertion :—"Thou hast the words of eternal life ; and we believe and are *sure* that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." John vi., 68, 69.

That knowledge of God, therefore, which is true, is, an intuitive knowledge, a real knowledge, a heavenly knowledge, a knowledge that purifies the life, and that gives to the mind unmovable confidence. Lord, evermore give us this knowledge.

II. *In what way does the true knowledge of God impart to men strength?*

Called often to difficult duties, exposed always to strong temptation, and subject, at times, to sore suffering, we need strength. This needed strength lies in the knowledge of God. Knowledge of nature and her laws, knowledge of the contendings of good men, knowledge of the presence and sympathy of friends, all help to make men strong to do, and to endure. But longer than all, broader than all, deeper than all, and stronger than all these, is the strength that comes from the true knowledge of God.

It makes men strong by enabling them to *estimate things at their true value.* "The kingdoms of this world and the glory of them," dazzle the eye not accustomed to look on the brightness of the glory of Jehovah. The simple shepherd, mentioned by the Latin poet, thought the village to which he drove his sheep to market, a great town till

he saw Rome. So do things that are "seen and temporal" look great, till there dawns on the soul the glory, and the greatness of things that are "unseen and eternal." How does his country, with kindred and father's house, appear so small in the eyes of a man with such strong affections as Araham? The Lord had appeared to him. How do the treasures of Egypt, and its political influence appear so worthless in the eyes of Moses? He had "seen Him who is invisible." How does John Knox make so little account of the proud Queen, who carried things with so high a hand over other men? He came into her presence direct from the presence of the King of Kings; and the glory of Mary, seen in Holyrood, paled before the glory of Jesus seen in the study in the Canongate. The toil and danger the believer faces, as well as the pleasure and profit he forsakes, vanish before a glimpse of God's face, as false fires and phantoms before the sun. "What things were gain" to Paul before he saw the Lord "he counted loss," after that great discovery :—

> "For no falsehood can endure
> Touch of celestial temper, but returns
> Of force to its own likeness."

It makes men strong by *bringing them celestial company.* The heart of man yearns for sympathy, and company, in seasons of conflict and suffering. The wail of Elijah, "I only am left," is the saddest a soldier can utter; but the presence, felt though unseen, of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of the angels, is sufficient to give courage to the faintest heart. When David felt that God was near to sustain him, he said, "I will not fear ten thousand of people." His position, he tells us, at another time is immovable, and why? "Because the Lord is at my right hand." Psalm xvi. Here is a prisoner brought before the judgment seat of Nero, at a time when this lion raged for human blood with more than brutal fury. The prisoner is aged, and on his person he bears traces of

suffering and sorrow. No advocate dares plead his cause, no witness cares to testify of his innocence, and no friend ventures to cheer him with a word of sympathy. But see how boldly he confronts his judge, and how fearlessly he confesses Christ. Is he in despair, and weary of life? Or has his imprisonment stupified his mind and deadened his feelings? His holy calmness comes not from that: but into his prison,—possibly the horrible Mamertine,—came that same Jesus, who appeared to him on his way to Damascus, who again stood by him a prisoner in the castle at Jerusalem, who said to him in Corinth "Be not afraid,"—this same Jesus came to him in his cell, walked, invisible, forth with him to the judgment hall, and there stood by his side and strengthened him. This is his own account in his last letter to Timothy: "All men forsook me: notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." II. Tim. iv. 16.

It makes men strong by making them *partakers of a divine life.* In the struggle with evil a correct judgment, or spiritual discernment, is good: so is celestial company and sympathy: but better still is a divine life, something born of God that cannot commit sin, nor die. Now the true knowledge of God is as the sun, when it shines on the plant. The life-giving beams not only shine on the surface of each blade and stalk, but, after a mysterious manner, enter their very substance, and change everything, after a fashion, into the nature and image of that light. So God shines into men's hearts, to give them "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God:" It is not, that the sun shines on the believer, but he is changed in some degree into the image of that sun. It is not that the Holy Spirit glances into his soul, but it abides there, as in his proper and peculiar temple, and possesses the feelings and faculties of the soul as the sap pervades the tree. Through the true knowledge of God, therefore, the believer's "life is hid with Christ in God;" and not simply *through*, but "*in* Christ," strengthening

him, he can do all things. How can he therefore fail to be strong, seeing the fountain of his strength is in God? "This is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it." Prov. 16. 22.

It makes men strong because their God fights for them. Those who knew the Lord are known of him. They are thus his peculiar people, and His glory is bound up in the issue of their conflicts. "I pray for them," our Redeemer pleads. For whom? For those that "*know* Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent:" for those "to whom I have *manifested* Thy name:" for those who have *known surely* that I came out from Thee." John xvii. Their cause, therefore, is the cause of God; and he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye. Zech. ii. 8. Once, there lay in a fortress of remote Abyssinia, a few prisoners so utterly prostrate in means and strength, that there were none in that miserable land so forlorn and miserable. Yet these poor men drew on themselves, and on their wrongs, the attention of statesmen and generals, moved the heart of a great community, filled the country of their captivity with armed soldiers, battered down their prison wall, slew the tyrant that oppressed them, and regained, amid the gratulations of the civilized world, their lost liberty and their native land. Their citizenship and office in a mighty empire did this for them. They knew our queen as their queen and were known of her: the honour of Britain was involved in their fate; therefore when weak they were strong. But they who know the Lord and are known of him are citizens of a King whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and whose kingdom shall not be destroyed. Is this King for them? Who can be against them?

Thus it is that the people that know their God are strong. By this knowledge, as with a second sight, they see men and things in their true colours: by this knowledge they feel strong in the companionship of their Lord and the ministry of his angels: by this knowledge

they are changed into the image of God and made in a mysterious and real sense partakers of his strength and life; and by this knowledge they are so identified with God and His glory that "He fighteth for them."

III. *What light do these words shed on our position and duties as soldiers of Christ?* Soldiers is the proper word here, for the text has a martial ring. It sounds of arms, the camp, and the battle-field. But the war to which Daniel refers was so peculiar, so incapable of repetition, or recurrence, that it may seem impossible to draw from that war lessons directly applicable to ourselves, and our peaceful times. That these Jewish martyrs were made strong to resist tyranny, and to uphold the truth, in time of fiery trial, may seem to some, a matter of mere historical curiosity, which cannot be to us of any practical interest. These words do contain an historical fact of a value to us, it is true, somewhat remote: but they contain, further, a practical truth, of deep and abiding interest to Christians till the end of the world as Paul shews, in the conclusion he draws from these very contendings: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Heb. xii. 1.

"The battle of the warriors with confused noise and garments rolled in blood," is only a type and emblem of the keener, closer, subtler battle "with burning and fuel of fire," moral and spiritual in its nature, which the coming of Christ has kindled on the earth. In this war, which is ever waxing hotter, where is our position and what are our duties? Our position and work are not, as to their essential features, materially different from those of this noble army of martyrs.

Who are our foes? Though the redemption purchased by Christ is so complete and so free, yet it is not to be obtained by us without real and arduous conflict. In this difficult and dangerous struggle hypocrites are

always vanquished and believers are often grievously wounded. The fight is not between the good and bad men in the world or between the good and bad principles of our nature. The higher powers of the universe are involved in this deadly dispute. "It is not the English that I see that I am afraid of," said an Indian Prince, "but the English that I do not see." The foes with whom final issues lie are lost and malignant and unseen spirits; "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high places." Eph. vi. 12. These enemies appear now as "roaring lions" resorting to open-handed *violence* as they slip the dogs of war and light the fires of persecution: again, they appear as "crooked serpents" and "angels of light," resorting to dark deceit, as they dig their pits and set their snares. In the time of the Maccabees, both deceit and violence were used against "the people that knew their God,"—"many fell down slain," and many "were corrupted by flatteries." In our time the violence of sword and fire has ceased, and it is now mainly by the flatteries of deceit the last conflict between good and evil is to be decided.

Some, Satan corrupts by the flattery of *lust*. Without, in the streets of our cities and lying in wait at every corner is the strange woman that flatters with her lips. "She hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her." Prov. vii. Multitudes again he corrupts by the glitter of *money*. The love of money that eats into the heart like a cancer, searing the conscience and destroying alike the love of God and the love of man is the besetting sin of commercial people and colonists. How many fair professors among us coveting after riches have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." I Tim. vi. Then, the best intellects of our day he corrupts by the "vain deceit of *philosophy*." In its own sphere human wisdom is good and useful to

the Church, but it falls wofully from its high office when it rejects, or distorts the revelation of God, resolved to admit nothing which is above reason, as if a man persisted in reading by the light of his candle after the sun had risen. Yet these petty subtleties dazzle man's sight: so that the warning of Paul was never more needed than now: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy." Further still, many devout but silly hearts he corrupts by the pomp of *ceremonial* worship. Having lost experience of the power of religion on their souls they gradually lose its substance, but being unable to be without some form of worship they set up a shadow in room of the substance "after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ." Coloss. ii. 8. And lastly, men of rigid morals he corrupts by the flattery of *self-righteousness*. Like the proud Pharisee, the companion and the contrast of the humble publican, their prayers is a thanking; their thanking a boasting; their boasting an unbounded presumption. Of such it may be said that "they are removed to another gospel, which is not another," but a perversion of the gospel of Christ. Gal. i. 7. Let us not make light of the opposition of Satan, because he comes to us with the fiery darts of subtle and unseen conflict. Of such a conflict, altogether mental and spiritual, Bunyan says:— "In this combat no man can imagine unless he had seen and heard as I did, what sighs and groans burst from Christian's heart: it was the dreadfullest fight that ever I saw."

Where is our strength? Does it lie in the strength and dignity of human nature, as say the Pelagians? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint: therefore, without Christ we can do nothing. Does it lie in education and intellectual knowledge, as say the secularists? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Prov. i. 7. Does it lie in leaning on the arm of a human priesthood and of an infallible Church, as say the Roman-

ists? Thus saith the Lord: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." Jer. xvii. 5.

In this inevitable conflict we must not rely on our own strength, nor on the resources of nature, nor on anything short of that strength that comes from the true knowledge of God. We have supernatural enemies to contend with, and we need supernatural strength. Where can we get this strength, but in that knowledge of God that out of weakness made the noble army of martyrs strong; that knowledge of God and Christ which is eternal life: that knowledge that consists in "tasting that God is good," that knowledge of Christ for which Paul suffered the loss of all things; that knowledge with which he prays the Collossians may be filled in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. "He who rushes into this conflict," says a celebrated author, "without thinking of Christ, without putting his trust in Him, and without continually looking to Him for strength and regarding himself as a member of His body, deriving all life and vigour from Him is demented. He knows not what he is doing."

Brethren, "happy is the man that findeth this wisdom and getteth this understanding. She is more precious than rubies and all the things you can desire are not to be compared unto her." Seek this knowledge as silver, and search for it as for hid treasure.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

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NEW COVENANT PRIVILEGES.

"*But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*" HEBREWS XII., 22—24.

IN these verses the superiority of the new to the old covenant, that is, of the new to the old dispensation of the covenant of grace, is set forth in a threefold point of view. The superiority is exhibited with reference to I. the *Scene*, II. the *Society*, and III. the *Sacrifice* of the present, as distinguished from

the ancient economy. The *Scene* to which, as Christians, we are introduced, is described by three names: "Mount Sion," "City of the living God," and "The heavenly Jerusalem." The *Society*, to which we are introduced, comprehends three elements—human, angelic and divine —"An innumerable company of angels," "the church of the first born," with the "spirits of the just made perfect," and "God the Judge of all," with "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." The *Sacrifice*, to which we are introduced, is that which was offered on Calvary, and which is described as "the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Let us consider these particulars in detail, keeping in view, that the design for which they are set before us is mainly to deepen our sense of obligation and responsibility. May the Lord the Spirit guide our meditations, and impress the truth on our hearts.

I. THE SCENE.

First, let us consider the *Scene* to which 'under the gospel dispensation' we are introduced, "*Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.*" These words are not, of course, to be understood in a literal sense. The language is figurative, and the question arises: What is the real meaning involved in these figurative terms? In reply it would be easy to enumerate many points. I think it better, however, to call your attention to three ideas which seem specially indicated by the three names given to the scene. These ideas are *Beauty*, *Permanence* and *Spirituality*.

1. The idea of *Beauty*, or attractiveness, is that which seems specially suggested by the name "*Mount Sion*." Mount Sinai, to which reference is made in the previous verses, as the scene of the old dispensation, was a stern rugged mountain in the wilderness of Arabia. When God made the old covenant in Sinai he descended in terrible majesty. The mountain burned with fire; it was enveloped

in blackness and darkness; tempests raged, lightning flashed, and thunders rolled around it. So terrible was the scene that the Israelites could not endure it; and even Moses, bold and courageous though he was, was compelled to say—"I exceedingly fear and quake." Zion, on the other hand, was a beautiful mountain in the pleasant land. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King" (Psalm 48, 2.) It is described (Ps. 50, 2), as "the perfection of beauty"; and God's people are represented (Is. 35, 10) as coming to Mount Zion "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." We thus arrive at the idea that while Sinai, the scene of the old covenant, was distinguished by the terrors of Divine justice, Sion, the scene of the present economy, is distinguished by the beauty or attractiveness of Divine Grace. There was, indeed, grace at Sinai, but there it appeared like streaks of light in a dark lowering sky. Mount Sion, on the other hand, is all radiant with celestial light, and bathed in eternal sunshine.

2. The idea of *Permanence* is that which seems specially suggested by the name "*City of the living God.*" Of Mount Sinai God never said: "This is my rest here will I stay." It was not a city of habitation. There God merely pitched his tent or tabernacle, where he turned aside, like a wayfaring man, to tarry for a night. It was indeed a glorious tent he made for himself on Sinai. "There was under his feet, as it were, a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." Still it was but a tent, not a dwelling place; a tabernacle, not a permanent abode. But Sion is the "*City* of the living God." "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever; for I have desired it." (Psalm 132, 13 and 44.) We thus arrive at the idea that while the old dispensation, represented by the tabernacle at Sinai, was intended to last but for a limited time, the new dispensa-

tion, as the city of the loving God, was to last while sun and moon endure. There was to be a removing of the one, as of those "things that are made;" while the other remains, as of "things which cannot be shaken." (Hag. 2. 6 and 7; Heb. 12. 26—28). We accordingly find that the old dispensation has passed away. The tabernacle has been taken down and the temple destroyed. The priests have been stripped of their vestments, and the altar of its victims. The whole ceremonial system has been abolished (Eph. 2. 14 and 15). But the gospel dispensation continues, and shall continue while the world continues, and shall only merge at last into the glories of the heavenly state.

3. The idea of *Spirituality* is that which seems specially suggested by the name "*heavenly Jerusalem.*" Mount Sinai, where the law was given, was a material mount. It was "a mount that might be touched." It was thus a fit emblem of a dispensation, with which were connected so many of the "beggarly elements" of the world (Gal. 4. 9. Col. 2. 20.) In its sacraments, sacrifices, priesthood—in all its worship and service, the old dispensation addressed itself very much to the outward senses. But the service of the present dispensation is more spiritual in its character. It resembles that of the heavenly city wherein John saw no temple (Rev. 21. 22). Through the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ we are now delivered from these carnal ordinances, and beggarly elements, to which the Israelites were in bondage. Though descended from Isaac, the position of the Israelites was like that of the children of Hagar, the bondwoman. Our position is like that of the children of Sarah. Sinai corresponds with Hagar, and Jerusalem with Sarah; and, we are not come to the Mount which "gendereth to bondage," or even to Jerusalem, as identified with ceremonial worship, but to "Jerusalem which is above," and which is "free," and "the mother of us all." (Gal. 4. 22—31.) Ours, in short, is a system of spiritual freedom,

as distinguished from a system of ceremonial bondage. Nor can I here help observing how great is the folly of those who attempt to lead Christians back to the wilderness, from the heavenly Jerusalem to the material Mount, and to fasten on the necks of freemen in Christ, a yoke which even the Jews were unable to bear. Let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage (Gal. 5. 1).

The scene, then, to which we are now introduced, is distinguished by its beauty, its permanence, its spirituality. We are not come to the stern grandeur of Sinai, but to Mount Zion, the perfection of beauty ; not to the tent or tabernacle where like a wayfaring man God turned aside to tarry for a night, but to the city of his permanent abode ; not a mount that might be touched and the beggarly elements of the world, but to the spiritual service of the heavenly Jerusalem. Let us not forget the heavier responsibilities under which our higher privileges place us. If the Jews, introduced to a scene of inferior beauty, permanence and spirituality, were required to serve God with reverence and godly fear, how much more does it become us, introduced to Mount Sion, the city of the living God and the heavenly Jerusalem, to cherish those feelings of holy awe which were demanded of Moses when, from the midst of the burning bush, there was laid upon him this solemn command—"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

II. THE SOCIETY.

Let us now, in the second place, advert to the *Society* to which we are come under the present dispensation. This is composed of beings *human*, *angelic* and *divine*. Of human beings there are the general assembly and church of the first born and the spirits of just men made perfect. Then there is the innumerable company (myriads) of an-

gels. Finally, as to the divine element in the glorious society, we have God the Judge of all, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. This Society is virtually the same as that described in the fourth and fifth chapters of the Revelation. There, however, the order in which the parties are mentioned, is the reverse of that in the verses before us. In the Revelation our attention is first directed to the central throne, which is occupied by God, the Judge of all, and by the Lamb that was slain, the mediator of the new covenant. Next our attention is directed to the redeemed from among men represented by the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders; these from the innermost circle around the throne. Finally, the angels are spoken of as forming the outermost circle. But in the verses before us, approaching as it were, from the outside, we come first to the angels, then to the redeemed, then to God, the Judge of all, and Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant. John describes the society, proceeding from the centre to the circumference, while in the text we are supposed to proceed from the circumference to the centre. Let us follow the order of the text.

1. First, we are come to "*an innumerable company of angels.*" There were angels under the old, as there are angels in connection with the present economy. Thus we read (Ps. 68. 17): "The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place;" and Stephen (Acts vii. 53) reminds the Jews that they had "received the law by the disposition of angels." As to the present dispensation, our Lord's advent was announced by an angel, and proclaimed by a multitude of the angelic host. After his conflict with Satan in the wilderness, angels came and ministered to him. An angel strengthened him in the garden, and rolled away the stone from the door of his sepulchre. Angels announced his resurrection and accompanied him in his glorious ascension. And, "are

they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" But in what special sense are we now come to the company of angels, as distinguished from the manner in which the Jews came to them under the old economy? The question is not very easily answered. Still it may be observed that as the sin of Adam had created a breach or chasm between the family of man, and unfallen angels; and as in connection with the giving of the law they are introduced as the ministers of justice, so through the incarnation, obedience, death and resurrection of Christ, the chasm has been bridged, and communion secured, and angels are now sent to the heirs of salvation in more abundant measure as ministers of mercy—rejoicing in their conversion, shielding them by their powerful though unseen agency, and conducting their disembodied spirits to the mansions of eternal blessedness. At all events, it is a matter of fact for which we ought to be grateful, that under the present dispensation we do enjoy the ministry of holy angels. It is a solemn and alarming thought that at every moment we are exposed to the malice and wiles of the great enemy and the hosts of fallen angels, who would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect, and who, even in the house of God, are busy in their efforts to thwart the power of the truth, and blunt the arrows of conviction, and to suggest unbelieving thoughts to the minds of God's people. On the other hand, how delightful is the thought that there is an innumerable company of unfallen angels, whose ministry we enjoy, who have a special charge given them over every one of the redeemed, that in some way, which I cannot explain, they strengthen for duty, and fortify against the assaults of temptation, and that as they are the sharers of our struggles here, so they shall be the companions of our glory hereafter!

2. Secondly, we are come to the "*general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven*" and to "*the spirits of just men made perfect.*" We enjoy

the communion of saints in a wider, in a higher, sense than did believers under the old dispensation. As Christians we form part and parcel of the general assembly, or Catholic church (for Catholic church just means general assembly), a church confined to no particular race or country, but including a multitude, which no man can number, from all nations, kindreds, peoples, and tongues. The church, of which, as Christians, we are members, is no narrow local institution, as it was before the death and resurrection of Christ, nor is it uncatholic, sectarian and exclusive, as Romanists and Ritualists would make it. It embraces all who have been redeemed by the blood, and regenerated by the Spirit of Christ—all "who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Philip. iii. 3.) And, is not this a delightful thought? When, for example, we sit down at a communion feast, is it not delightful to think that we meet together, not simply as members of a particular congregation, or of a particular branch of the church of Christ, but as really identified with all those, of every name and denomination, throughout the whole world, who have the Spirit of Christ?

The members of the general assembly, or Catholic church to which we are come, are all "first born" children; for the word "first born" is, in the original Greek, in the plural number, and thus points not so much to the elder brother, who is preeminently the first born, as to all those, whom he is not ashamed to call his brethren. As "first born" they are all kings and priests to God, and heirs of an inheritance prepared for them before the world's foundations were laid, and which shall endure, when this earth and these heavens shall have passed away. Their names are moreover "written in heaven." They may not be inscribed in the roll of earthly citizenship, or emblazoned among the great ones of earth. But, what is infinitely better, they are citizens of the New Jerusalem: their names are inscribed in the Lamb's

book of life, and from this shall never be erased. (Rev. iii. 5.)

But the human department of the Society, to which we are now introduced, includes not merely the general assembly or Catholic church of the first born, who in Christ have obtained, in a peculiar sense since his coming, the position and privileges of the sons of God. It includes also "*the spirits of just men made perfect*," who previously had entered into glory, and who, together with New Testament believers, constitute the complete mystical body of Christ. They without us would not be made perfect. (Heb. xi. 40.) We without them would not be perfect. Both together constitute a perfect whole with Christ as head. Thus the great human society of which as Christians we form a part, includes the whole redeemed family of God, both in earth and in heaven, saints of the old economy, and also of the new; the great cloud of witnesses represented by Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Samuel and the prophets, and the innumerable throng, who are either now pressing through the wilderness, or are already within the confines of the better country. To this glorious fellowship we now belong. Christ's mystical body is not divided. Wheresoever its members are, or to whatsoever era they belong, they are all united to him, partakers of his Spirit, and so members one of another. Is it not cheering and consoling to meditate on this view of the communion of the saints? We often grieve because we miss from our sides those who were our chosen companions, with whom we went to the house of God in company. Some of these are separated from us this day by wide-spreading continents, or the deep-rolling ocean. Some of them have passed from earth, and never shall we see them in the flesh, till we meet with them before the great white throne. But is it not consolatory to know that, nevertheless, we are all one in reality in Christ? Time or space cannot divide us. They and we are even

now most closely united, and enjoy real communion as members of the one great family in earth and heaven.

3. It is further our privilege, in the third place, that we are come under the present dispensation to "*God the Judge of all*," and to "*Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.*" In ancient times, God was in a peculiar sense the Judge of Israel. The Jews could say, "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us." (Is. xxxiii. 22.) He was their judge in the favourable sense of being their defender, their protector, their deliverer; as in a lower but yet favourable sense, Gideon, and Samson, and Jephthah, and Samuel, were Judges of Israel. In this favourable sense, God is no longer the Judge of any particular nation, or people. He is alike the Judge of the Gentiles, and of the Jews, who submit to him in the Gospel of his Son. In former times, the Gentiles trembled to think of God as the Judge of Israel. They remembered how, as the Judge of Israel, he had smitten Pharaoh and his hosts, had crushed the power of Moab and Ammon, had vanquished the Midianites and Amalekites, and had thundered on the Philistines. Now, the Gentiles are invited to rejoice that God is no respecter of persons, but extends the shield of his protection over all of every nation who submit to the sceptre of his grace.

Besides coming to God as the Judge of all, we are come to "*Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.*" Moses was the mediator of the old covenant; he was not, however, a real mediator, who could interpose, on the ground of his own merits, between God and man, and effect reconciliation between them. He was but a typical mediator. Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, is the real mediator, who as God-man is fitted to deal on equal terms with sinful men and the offended Deity. He can lay his hand on both, and, by his infinitely meritorious sacrifice, expiate the sinner's guilt and propitiate the justly offended lawgiver. Through him both Jew and Gentile

have immediate access to the throne of grace—to the presence of our reconciled Father. Here it may be added that in the connexion in which Christ is thus presented as mediator, we are led to think of him as the centre and bond of union of all holy beings in the wide universe. It is through him, as we have seen, that unfallen angels and redeemed men are brought together. It is through him that the middle wall of partition is broken down between Jew and Gentile. It is through him that God and man are reconciled. Thus all holy beings find, and shall ever find, their centre and bond of union in the God-man Christ Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.

Such is the society, human, angelic, and divine, to which the Gospel introduces us—such is the august assembly to which, if believers, we individually belong. O that we were enabled to realize, in some adequate manner, the exalted privilege of forming part of so august an assembly—of being associated with all unfallen angels and with all the redeemed from among men; and, above all, of enjoying communion, through the Spirit, with God the Judge of all, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. How well fitted is the thought of this to lift us above the petty circles and distinctions of this earth, and how impressively does it teach us to keep our garments unspotted from the world, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, and in all respects to comport ourselves as beseems the position and character of those who claim to be closely and indissolubly associated with all holy beings, human, angelic, and divine!

III. THE SACRIFICE.

Having considered the scene and the society, it now remains that in the third place we consider the *sacrifice* to which the new dispensation introduces us. This is described as "*the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better*

things than that of Abel." The "blood of sprinkling" means the atoning sacrifice of Christ—His blood shed for the remission of sins. It is called the blood of sprinkling with allusion to the manner in which, under the Old Testament, the blood of the typical sacrifices was sprinkled on various objects. Thus we read (Heb. ix., 19–22), "When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry; and almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." As thus prefigured in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, Christ offered himself as a sacrifice in our room; and his blood, sprinkled, as it were, on our consciences, frees us from guilt and condemnation.

When it is said that this blood of sprinkling "speaketh better things than that of Abel," I do not think that reference is made to Abel's own blood, which was shed by Cain, but rather to the blood of the typical sacrifice which Abel offered. Of this sacrifice mention had been made by the Apostle in the preceding chapter—"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it, he, being dead, yet speaketh." (Heb. xi. 4.) Abel, as we know from the account in Genesis, offered of the firstlings of his flock. In his sacrifice there was the shedding of blood, and thus an exhibition of his faith in the great sacrifice which Christ was to offer in the fulness of time. God accepted this sacrifice, which was excellent of its kind. But the sacrifice of Christ is more excellent than this, or any of the ancient sacrifices, of which Abel's is mentioned as an example. The sacrifice of Christ is of

infinite value. He is the Son of God as well as the Son of man, and his Divinity stamps an infinite value on his obedience, sufferings, and death. His blood, therefore, speaks better things, infinitely better things, than Abel's, or any of the ancient sacrifices. These had no power to take away guilt from the conscience, but only external defilement. But the blood of Christ Jesus, God's own Son, cleanses from all sin. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix., 13, 14.)

The infinite excellence of Christ's sacrifice, as compared with ancient sacrifices, renders its repetition unnecessary. Had the ancient sacrifices been perfect, they would not have needed to be repeated year by year, month by month, and day by day, continually. The fact of this repetition argued their imperfection. But, as Christ's sacrifice is of infinite value, it needs not to be repeated. "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) They, therefore, who pretend to renew, or continue the oblation of of Christ, in the sacrifice of the Mass, virtually deny its perfection, when he died upon Calvary. They virtually declare that he had not then finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Blessed be God, Christ's sacrificial work is complete. Nothing needs to be added to it, and such is its perfection that it is infinitely sufficient for expiating the guilt of the whole human family.

There is thus the greatest encouragement for every one who feels the burden of guilt pressing upon his conscience to repair to Christ for pardon. I know not, my hearers, what the extent of your sins may have been, what their number, what their aggravations. They may have been

countless as the sands on the sea shore; and, for magnitude, like the great mountains. They may have been committed against the clearest light, in the face of solemn warnings, in disregard of solemn engagements—engagements entered into in some solemn hour when God's hand was pressing heavily upon you—in the chamber of sickness, or under the stroke of bereavement—or at the Communion table, when partaking of the memorials of the Saviour's broken body and shed blood; but whatever your sins—however numerous, or however aggravated, be assured that the blood of Christ can cleanse them all away, and that through faith in him you may obtain peace, and pardon, and eternal life. But forget not the fearfully aggravated guilt with which you will be chargeable, if you neglect or despise the precious blood of Christ. If "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

In closing this exposition of the superiority of the Scene, the Society, and the Sacrifice, to which the Gospel introduces us, let me say that, however exalted the privileges which belong to us even now, there is yet a higher sense, in which we shall yet come to Mount Sion, the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the august assembly of holy beings, human, angelic and divine, and realize the advantages of having our robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. We now walk by faith, and not by sight. In a far higher and nobler sense, than can now be conceived of, believers shall hereafter dwell in the New Jerusalem, enjoy the fellowship of saints and angels; and, seeing God without any intervening veil, reap the riper fruits of the Saviour's precious blood. Of this glorious future, bright glimpses

are disclosed to us in the Book of the Revelation. The City of God is there described as surrounded by a wall great and high, having the glory of God; her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Its gates are pearls, its streets are gold. It has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. There dwell the nations of the saved, and the angelic hosts. There flows the river, and blooms the tree of life. Within the precincts of that blessed abode nothing that defileth can ever enter, and there shall be no more curse, and God shall wipe away all tears from his people's eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. God grant that we all, introduced into the enjoyment of new Covenant privileges here, may hereafter share in the richer and riper joys of the New Jerusalem, which is above.

CANADA

Presbyterian Church Pulpit.

BY REV. DAVID INGLIS,

MACNAB ST. CHURCH, HAMILTON.

OUR ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER.

"*If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins.*" I. JOHN ii. 1, 2.

IN contrast with the typical offerings, which were often renewed under the law, Jesus Christ hath appeared once for all to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; but, having offered this one sacrifice for sin, He did not then lay aside His priestly office. "By His own blood He entered into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." He now appears in the presence of God for us, presenting us there, as the High Priest bore the names of the tribes on the breast-plate when he entered the typical Holy Place. This truth of the priestly intercession of Jesus Christ

meets the wants of believers, under the sense of sin and failure and feebleness. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" but the intercession of our great High Priest meets us with cleansing for all the pollutions of our way. Are we then to take the whole question easily—to go on in feebleness and failure and sin, trusting in the constant supply of pardoning mercy as anticipating all our needs? Nay—for these things are written "that we sin not," and the assurance of this advocacy and intercession is designed, in harmony with the whole scope of this Epistle, to bring us into communion with the Holy One, that we may "walk in the light as He is in the light;" and, surely, in this walk of light and life and love, it should strengthen and animate us against the enfeebling sense of sin when we contemplate the assurance, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins."

In the consideration of the text to which I now invite you, let us, in dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, seek to obtain a view of the scriptural doctrine regarding the necessity, the nature, the manner, and the grounds of the Lord's advocacy on behalf of His people; and then look to the grounds of confidence we have in the character and qualifications of our Advocate, "Jesus Christ the righteous."

1st. The necessity of this advocacy.

The word Advocate is a forensic term denoting one who, as the representative of his client, advocates his cause and defends his interests. This advocacy of Jesus Christ is styled his intercession. In a large sense it expresses the truth that Christ pleads our cause, manages our interests, and answers the accusations of our enemies. The most characteristic aspect of our Lord's intercession is illustrated by the function of the High Priest on the day of Atonement, who having offered the appointed sacrifice entered the Holy of Holies to intercede for the people.

Such an agency, advocacy and intercession, the Scriptures every where teach us that the case of Christ's people imperatively demands, and that He continually exercises. The priestly interposition of Christ on our behalf was not confined to that brief period of humiliation which was consummated in his death and burial. Some conceive of the resurrection as the first step in His restoration to the place which He resigned when He took our nature. The conceptions of men on this point are often vague, and, therefore, erroneous. It is fancied that, in the history of our Lord's existence, He took our nature for a limited period and for certain purposes which He finished at His death ; but that, when these were accomplished, He put off our nature and ascended in pure, unmixed Deity. In opposition to all this, the Word of God teaches us that God did not lend His Son to us for a temporary purpose, but gave Him to us as His unspeakable gift. Not only do the Scriptures take special pains to assure us of His humanity in the records of His resurrection, and of His various appearances to His disciples during the forty days, in which by many infallible signs, He showed Himself to be the very Jesus who was crucified ; but, moreover, they plainly teach us that He wears our nature now, and in that nature is seated on the right hand of God ; that His relations to His people are unchanged by His exaltation ; that He is our brother still, and is as devoted to His gracious undertaking now amid the glories of the Throne, as he was amid the shame of the cross. He has entered Heaven as our representative ; nay, more, it is in consequence of His humiliation and death that He now occupies the place of glorious mediatorial dominion. It is the same Jesus of Nazareth who is exalted, and it is because He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death that "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name." So far from having abandoned His relations to the church, this exaltation is only a vantage ground which

His love has secured, from which He may watch over His own, prosecute their interests, and secure to them the blessings which he died to procure. The love of Christ passeth knowledge; at every step we fail to grasp its vastness and appreciate its devotion. On the cross, and on the throne, it is alike beyond our comprehension, and little wonder if at first we believe not for joy, when we are told that at the right hand of God He is ours, and that the praises of all Heaven neither distract His thought nor alienate His care from the church which He loved and purchased with His own blood.

We have said that the Scriptures teach us that our case imperatively demands such a continual agency and perpetual priesthood. Creation would become a waste of ruins if it were not perpetuated by Providence, which is just a continued exercise of creative energy. In like manner redemption would prove an utter failure, but for Christ's intercession, which has been called a perpetual oblation. The sacrifice is not repeated, but the one sacrifice by which He put away sin is continually presented before God. Many seem to think that Christ, having redeemed us, has left us to make our own way to heaven; but the doctrine of Scripture is that as the expiatory death of Christ was necessary, so the perpetual exhibition of that act is equally necessary, to vindicate God's righteousness in the bestowment of life upon those who have sinned. This is not only true now in view of the fact that believers are constantly liable to sin in the present state, but it will be eternally true that their acceptance depends upon Christ's mediation. Accordingly the Apostle, in answer to the question—"Who is he that condemneth?" says not only "It is Christ that died," but urges also the fact,—"Yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." By the first He satisfied the law and secured eternal redemption for us; but His resurrection, exaltation and intercession are necessary to carry it into

effect. To bear our sins and then abandon His work, would have been to raise the drowning man above the waves, and then abandon him without bringing him safely to shore.

2nd. The nature of Christ's intercession.

Christ did not abandon his undertaking when he rose from the dead and ascended on high. His love is everlasting and unchangeable; and when He says, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world;" and again, "I leave the world and go unto the Father," His love to the Church was equally displayed in either event. The salvation of His people was His errand in ascending as well as in descending. It was expedient for them that He should go away, and He distinctly expressed his object in going. "I go to prepare a place for you." "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." His love avails itself of the place of Divine pre-eminence in various ways to advance the preparation of His Church for eternal glory; but we must confine our attention to one aspect of it—His advocacy of our cause, His priestly intercession to make good our acceptance, and obtain for us all blessings. When He uttered the tender and consoling address from which we have just quoted, He was about to discharge one important function of His priestly office in offering Himself a sacrifice for sin; and, in the words, "I go to prepare a place for you," He intimated His prospective entrance as High Priest with His own blood into Heaven itself, "now to appear in the presence of God for us." It is in the contemplation of this exercise of His unchangeable priesthood that the Apostle concludes, "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The sufficiency and acceptance of the sacrifice were attested by the resurrection of our Lord. During the ensuing forty days He showed Himself alive to His disciples by many infallible proofs. and then ascended bodily into

the heavens in such a manner as to leave for the comfort of His people an indubitable proof of His ascension, and thus we have the blessed assurance, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The assurance of my text is the counterpart of Paul's expression, "We have a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens for us, Jesus the Son of God." That this is the character of the advocacy intended in the text is evident, since the Apostle adds, "And He is the propitiation for our sins." His advocacy is not based upon the innocence or merits or righteousness of those for whom He pleads, but upon his "propitiation for our sins;" in other words, it is that of a High Priest. His plea is not that they have not deserved to die, but that He has died; not that they have not broken the law, but that he has magnified it, and made it honourable.

3rd. The manner of this advocacy.

We do not venture upon any curious questions as to the manner in which this advocacy is conducted—whether it is conducted in language which would be audible to human ears, and other considerations on which the Scriptures are silent. This much is clearly revealed, "He appears in the presence of God for us." As Stephen saw Him standing on the right hand of God, so John in vision saw in the midst of the throne "a Lamb as it had been slain." We know not whether words are employed, but it may well be conceived that no words are needed; that blood pleads for us; there is a voice in every wound. As in Grecian history, we read that Æschylus, the brother of Amynias, was convicted of a capital crime, and the Athenians stood ready to stone him, when Amynias, who had lost an arm in the battle of Salamis, dropped his robe, and, without speaking a word, held up the mutilated limb. The people, moved by that mute plea, granted him the life of his brother. So the Lord's very presence is a plea; He presents himself before the Father as the Lamb slain, and His blood prevails for His blood-bought

people. What chiefly concerns us to know is that His is a public and actual advocacy which declares God's righteousness in the bestowment of favour upon sinners.

4th. The grounds of this advocacy.

Our Lord's advocacy consists in the perpetual exhibition which He makes to the Father of the blood which He shed on the cross for the salvation of His people, in order to obtain for them the fruits of His oblation. His advocacy and intercession have this as the plea; "He is the propitiation for our sins." On this ground He obtains for His people the remission of sins and every other covenant blessing. "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." It is important that we should understand thoroughly the ground of this intercession, and not be misled by human analogies. As we have already said, the Lord Jesus cannot plead for us that we are innocent. Our very need of an advocate and intercessor with God implies that we are guilty; that we deserve to die. Yet our Lord's intercession is not a mere appeal to mercy. When Coriolanus, one of Rome's bravest warriors, fretted by the ingratitude of his countrymen, took into his passionate grasp the banner of Rome's enemies, and heading the foes of his country led them up to the very gates of his native city. Rome was saved by intercession. The mother of Coriolanus came forth and bowed before her son, pleaded the tender memories of his boyhood, and subdued him by her tears, for what brave man ever resisted a mother's tears and plaints; and he drew off his armies, leaving the city unscathed. But there is no analogy between this as an illustration of successful human intercession, and the intercession of our Lord. Christ intercedes with justice; it is not the intercession of burning tears and half-choked utterances. It is the intercession of a conqueror who claims the trophies of the victories he has won. It rests on the ground of His obedience, of His passion, of His death, of the redemption which He has achieved, wherein all the

divine perfections have their fullest display. We may not now dwell on these wonders of redeeming love, but we cannot leave them without noticing that it is on the ground of this accomplished work that the bestowment of the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier and Comforter of His people rests, so that all the graces of the Spirit should be recognised as obtained for us on this plea, and as the results of this advocacy. It is not unworthy of notice that the same word *Paraclete* is used to express the Lord's office with the Father, and the Holy Spirit's office with the church, though it is in the one case rendered "Advocate," and in the other "Comforter." There is more than a correspondence of words, there is a relation of offices. The mission of the Comforter is a result of the Lord's advocacy for us; and it will be found that Christ in heaven *for us*, and the Spirit here *with us* are inseparably connected with every blessing we receive and with every privilege we enjoy. The Lord by His advocacy resting on His finished atonement makes good our acceptance, and keeps the Holiest open to our approaches. He silences every accusation and presents our persons and our services as holy and acceptable to God. Our prayers in the Spirit He presents and secures their success, as the angel by the altar is seen in the vision presenting the prayers of saints with much incense. In view of this we are exhorted to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." From the vantage ground of the throne the Lord overlooks and overrules all that affects the church, and every individual member of it. From this vantage ground He pleads with the Father with all the minuteness and exactness of personal knowledge, and with all the tenderness of personal sympathy. The adaptation of His advocacy to the condition of His people is illustrated in that intercessory prayer with which He closes his earthly ministrations. He is in Heaven urging on our cause until that hour of triumph to which he pointed, when

he said—"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Our daily comfort and joy, our confidence and spiritual vigour, our full assurance in hope, our fervency and faith in prayer, our steadfastness in our profession, our peace and security in the midst of trials, must evidently depend upon our clear and satisfactory views of the sufficiency of His propitiation and the prevalence of His advocacy.

Our confidence in this intercession is greatly strengthened by the consideration of the qualifications of our Advocate, "Jesus Christ the righteous;" but the field which here opens up before us is too large to be entered on at this time; we can only say in general that our High Priest, Jesus Christ the righteous, is the link of connexion between God and man—the one Mediator. He is our Saviour, our Anointed Prophet, Priest and King, who, upon the terms and according to the principles of perfect righteousness, secures eternal life to all whom the Father hath given Him.

Let us seek, then, to obtain clear and impressive views of the great fact that we have an Advocate with the Father. Here there is need of caution lest we misconceive alike the reason for the necessity of such an advocacy and the purposes which it serves. A righteous God could not pardon sin until a full satisfaction had been rendered to the broken law; but we must not conceive of this as being necessary to overcome the hatred of God towards His fallen creatures. When, by the preaching of the Cross, men are convinced of sin and aroused to seek an escape from its curse, such light is shed upon the holiness and justice of God that they are apt to dread Him as their enemy, and to think that he must be appeased, and that salvation must be wrested as from a reluctant hand. The very last truth which they are willing to receive concerning God is that with which every syllable of the Gospel is vocal—"God is love." It be-

comes necessary, therefore, to vindicate God's love when we unfold the provision which that very love has made for their redemption. When we preach Christ as the propitiation for our sins, some persons think only of the righteousness of God which required such ample satisfaction before sin could be pardoned; they forget who Christ is and how the propitiation was furnished. "Herein is love—not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The work of Christ was not necessary to overcome the enmity of God, but "in this was manifested the love of God towards us, in that He sent His only begotten Son into the world" to render its exercise consistent with His righteous character and government. The truth about human salvation is not that guilty men are forced by pleading and sacrificing to reconcile God to themselves; but that God, having given the Sinless One to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, is now pleading with sinners to be reconciled to Him. Here is not enmity to be appeased, but love manifested. God so loved the world that He gave His own Son to furnish an adequate atonement for sin.

What is true of the propitiation which the death of Christ provided is also true of the intercession which the life of Christ effects. The perpetual intercession of Christ is necessary to vindicate the righteousness of God in the bestowment of eternal life on those who are by nature the children of wrath. But we are not to conceive of this doctrine as though it represented God as moved by the ceaseless pleadings of an Advocate to bestow with a reluctant hand the blessings of the Covenant. On the contrary, the fact that we have such an Advocate only completes the manifestation of that Divine Love which furnished such a sacrifice. He who is the propitiation for our sins is also our Advocate with the Father. God has given Him to us as His everlasting and inalienable gift, and exalted Him in our nature and as our representative

to His own right hand. Amid the glories of the Throne, as much as amid the shame and agony of the Cross, He is ours and is acting for us. In view of the one as well as of the other, we exclaim, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God." This intercession is necessary that God's righteousness may be honoured in the constant exercise of His grace towards the guilty; but it is the same love of the Father which gave the Son to the death for us all, which gives Him to us in all the fulness of His power and glory, to make intercession for us. We have come, therefore, to a fresh manifestation of the great Gospel doctrine that "God is love," in the contemplation of the truth in my text—"We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Surely believers may join trembling with their gladness in receiving this great mystery of godliness, that we are held in the embrace of this eternal and unchanging love, and are bound up with Christ in the bundle of life; and, while invigorated by such assurances of the advocacy of our Lord to press onward in the path of holy obedience, let us with holy fear watch against every sin, with the honest determination to "walk in the light as God is in the light." May we all learn to use this truth alike as a basis of hope and a motive to holiness.

To those of you who have not believed in the Lord Jesus to the saving of your souls I can only say that there is a message of salvation for you here. "Wherefore He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." It is this that makes the gospel a gospel to sinful men. He is ABLE TO SAVE—able to save TO THE UTTERMOST. This is the glorious message that I would now desire in the name of Christ, as His ambassador, to deliver to every one of you—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Come to Jesus. He is on

the throne; but the bow of grace spans the throne. Come with your sins. Come, even as you are—

"Just as I am and waiting not,
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come!"

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